PRO&CONTRA

Central European Studies in Humanities

Volume 2
Issue 2

Authors:

László Ambrus
(Eszterházy University)

Máté Gál
(Eszterházy University)

Yesmina Khedhir
(University of Debrecen)

Dušan Ljuboja
(Atelier, Eötvös Loránd University)

Krisztina Magyar
(Eszterházy University)

Líceum Publisher
Eger, 2018

PRO&CONTRA

Central European Studies in Humanities

ISSN 2630-8916 (online)

Managing publisher: Rector of Eszterházy Károly University
Published by Líceum Publisher, EKU, Eger
Head of publisher: Andor Nagy
Managing editor: Ágnes Domonkosi
Layout editor: Gergely Molnár
Year of publication: 2019

Table of Contents

László Ambrus

Austria-Hungary and the American Belligerence in World War One[1]

Pro&Contra 2

No. 2 (2018) 5–24.

[1] The author's research is supported by the grant EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00001 ("Complex improvement of research capacities and services at Eszterházy Károly University").

DOI: 10.33033/pc.2018.2.5

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to systematize the available material on the role played by Austria-Hungary in America's entry into the Great War. Particular focus is placed on the part Hungary played, as well as the situation of the Hungarian immigrants living in the United States during this time period (1914–1918), and to what extent their lives were affected during these years. The research utilizes a wide range of secondary sources, as well as contemporary articles from American and Hungarian newspapers, and, to some degree, primary sources also. The federal government and major leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt were concerned with the insidious acts of the German and Ottoman Empires, but they were much less anti-Austrian or anti-Hungarian which is intriguing given the fact that the war was in effect instigated by Austria-Hungary. This paper examines this question in detail by analyzing the events leading up to April, 1917, investigating the involvement of Hungarians in American aggression, and discussing the social backlash such actions provoked.

Keywords: World War One, belligerence, United States, Austria-Hungary, immigration, Hungarian-Americans, espionage

I. Introduction

On April 6, 1917, the United States of America officially entered World War One. In little less than the three years between 1914 and 1917, the Union had moved from an absolute rejection of violence to an enthusiastic support of the war effort. In his well-documented, thorough analysis of American society during the war, Michael S. Neiberg pointed out that contrary to common belief, Americans did not follow blindly a President with Messiah syndrome, and neither did they fall victim to the evil schemes of a mysterious "international financial elite". For American society, the path to war was paved with news of outrageous acts committed by the Central Powers, more specifically the German and Ottoman Empires, which included aggression against Belgium, the massacres of Armenians in Turkey, unrestricted submarine warfare, a series of sabotages on American soil,[2] the sinking of Lusitania and the attempts to provoke a war between Mexico and the U.S. Such actions made it clear to most Americans that they could not afford to let the

[2] See Tracie Provost, "Spy Games: German Sabotage and Espionage in the United States, 1914–1916." *FCH Annals: The Journal of the Florida Conference of Historians* 22 (June 2015): 123–136.

Central Powers win the war.[3] Although Woodrow Wilson won his second term in November, 1916 with the slogan "He kept us out of the war", it was only a few months later, at the beginning of 1917, that many Americans waited for the overt act justifying their entry into the war on the side of the Entente. Neiberg argues that American society was watching events very closely, and their support of hostility instead of isolationism was a much more informed opinion on their part than the academic literature previously suggested.

According to Neiberg, this change of view was based on three fundamental points. First, America recognized that securing Europe's future meant securing their own as well: "Europe may have been *over there*, but it was also close to home." Second, they collectively believed that by not having any part in instigating the conflict, they were acting in self-defense and in the interests of mankind against German imperialism. Third, they realized that their different ethnic identities meant less to them than their common American identity.[4]

The title of this paper reflects an interesting idea. Germany had played a crucial role in the three years leading up to American entering hostilities, and, although the US officially never declared war on it, the Ottoman Empire also played a role in convincing American society to support entering the war. But little is known about the role of the other great aggressor country among the Central Powers: Austria-Hungary. This paper aims to systematize the information available on the involvement of Austria-Hungary, more importantly Hungarians, in the American entry into the Great War. The situation of Hungarian immigrants living in the United States during this period is of particular concern, and in particular how their lives were affected during the war. This research is making use of a wide range of secondary sources, and contemporary newspaper pieces, both American and Hungarian, and, to some degree, primary sources as well. An examination of the secondary literature makes it clear that the insidious acts of the German and Ottoman Empires influenced the United States' decision to enter the war against the Central Powers in 1917; however, Austria-Hungary and Hungarian Americans did considerably less to provoke them than their allies, yet their involvement ought not to be overlooked.

---

[3] Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 222.

[4] Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 235.

II. Historical Background: The United States and the First World War

It is common knowledge that the First World War began following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Empire when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The reigning monarch, Franz Joseph I, was wary about declaring war on Serbia for fear of an attack by the Russian Empire, protecting their fellow Slavic country in the name of pan Slavism, but more importantly for defending its own political interests in the Balkans region. But with the encouragement of the German Emperor Wilhelm II, and after the Serbian rejection of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, Franz Joseph signed the declaration of war. The plan for Austria-Hungary was to quickly defeat Serbia, optimally before Russia could mobilize, but in case their military operations took longer than expected, Germany would hold the Russian forces at bay.[5] Of course, events did not go to plan and four years of bloodshed ensued the like of which had never been witnessed before.

The World War marked the first great international conflict between the United States and countries that had large immigrant populations in the Union. Although the war was instigated by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, their aggression against Serbia is given less attention in "Western" historiography than the German attack on Belgium.[6] The same was true in the case of the British, and French, and was also true for American newspapers of the time. Belgium was referred to as "Brave Little Belgium", or "Poor Little Belgium", and people in these countries, especially in the USA were outraged by the "brute force" Germany employed when they overran Belgium without a proper declaration of war.[7] These acts of violence, alongside several others during the course of the war, went a long way in convincing American society to abandon their pacifism.

---

[5] József Galántai, *Szarajevótól a háborúig: 1914. július* [From Sarajevo to the War. July 1914] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1975),

[6] By "Western" historiography, I mean here the academic literature from mostly the Anglo-Saxon nations and France.

[7] See Christophe Declercq, "From Antwerp to Britain and Back Again" in *Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory*, eds. Christophe Declercq and Julian Walker (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016), 94.

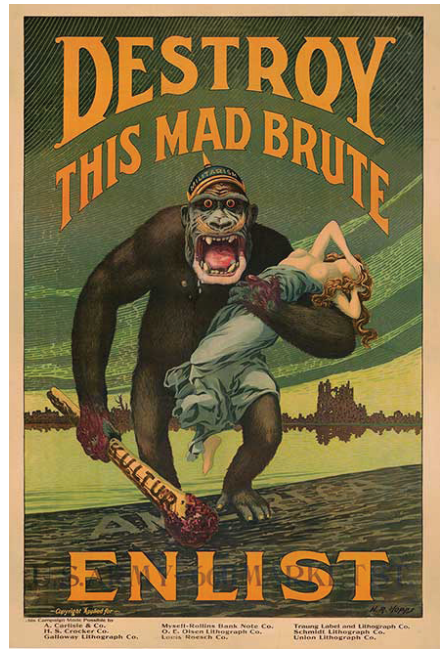

Figure 1: Destroy this mad brute - one of the best known American WWI propaganda posters[8]

Figure 1 is one of the most recognizable examples of how the German Empire was presented to the American public. In Harry R. Hopps' painting Germany is depicted as a huge ape in a German military helmet, gripping a bloody club in one hand, and holding a helpless woman, Lady Liberty, in the other. The poster is essentially a visual representation of Woodrow Wilson's speech to Congress on April 2, 1917, in which he stated that the United States was preparing to fight Germany because it had proved to be a menace to world peace and indeed, civilization itself.[9]

The German role in provoking American hostilities is recognized and well-documented. Following this short introduction, the next section attempts to discover how big of a role Hungarians played in this particular story. But before doing so, it seems necessary to briefly outline how such a great number of Hungarians came to be in the USA.

---

[8] The original source of the image is the website of the Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/exhibitions/static/world-war-i-american-experiences/images/objects/over-here/wwi0025-standard.jpg

[9] Akira Iriye, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations. Volume III. The Globalizing of America, 1913–1945.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.), 41.

III. Historical Background: Hungarians in the USA

Hungarian immigration to the United States was at an all-time high in the years preceding the Great War. There are several statistics attesting to the extent of immigration. An uninterrupted record of immigration to the US began in 1819; the Act of 1819 required the captains of all vessels arriving into the US from abroad to produce a list or manifest of all passengers to the local authorities. Immigration statistics were compiled by the Department of State between 1820 and 1870, by the Treasury Department, Bureau of Statistics, between 1867–1895; and since 1892, by a separate Office or Bureau of Immigration, as a part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.[10] One of the problems with the statistical data is that they usually show significant differences based on the place of origin and the location where the data was recorded: US immigration statistics, records taken at the place of boarding (e. g. Bremen or Hamburg in Germany, etc.), and the emigration statistics of the countries of origin are dissimilar in many cases.[11] Another problem is that immigration statistics are primarily based on headcounts, namely the aforementioned ship manifests or passenger lists. But a great number of immigrants took the journey to the USA to find employment, save money and then return to their respective home countries to invest their new-found wealth in businesses, land or property. Since many undertook this process several times, it was not uncommon for individuals to appear in the statistics every time they travelled to America. So as a result, some people were counted multiple times which distorts the figures. Immigration statistics do not take generally this phenomenon into consideration, so consequently, there are no accurate accounts on the exact number of immigrants.[12]

Hungarians, along with nationals from a dozen other Central- and Eastern European countries, arrived into the USA in great numbers in the period known as the Third Immigration Wave, between about 1881 and 1914. This period brought more than 23 million new immigrants from mostly European countries, to the US. In the first decade of the period, most immigrants arrived from Northern and Western Europe, but after 1890, the majority came from southern and eastern Europe.[13] Naturally, there had been other, although considerably smaller waves of Hungarian immigrants, but none of those can be

---

[10] US. Bureau of Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, DC, 1975), 97.

[11] Julianna Puskás, *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült* Államokban 1880–1940 [Hungarian Immigrants in the United States] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982.) 443–446.

[12] Julianna Puskás, *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide. 100 Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 21.

[13] Carl L. Bankston III., ed. *Encyclopedia of American Immigration* (Pasadena: Salem Press, 2010), 558.

compared to the 1890–1914 period. The main reasons for this were the immigration acts of 1921 and 1924, which essentially put an end to mass immigration to the US.[14]

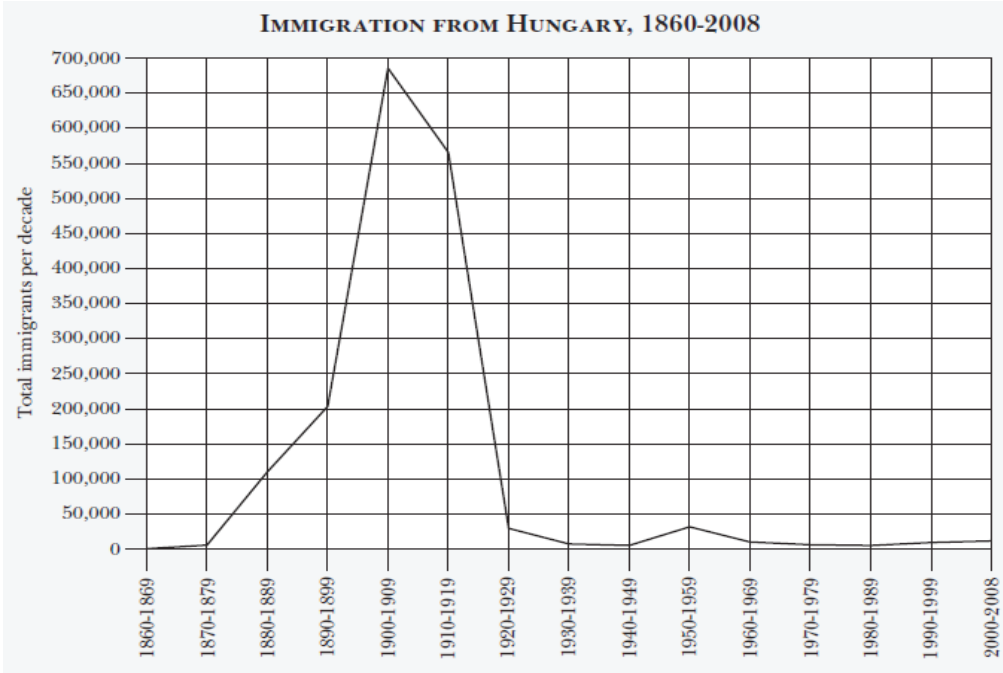

Figure 2: Line chart of Hungarian Immigration to the USA throughout history[15]

Figure 2 illustrates the extent of Hungarian immigration to the USA. Although, it shows just one variation of the several available statistics, the chart is still suitable for demonstrating that the peak of Hungarian immigration was in the decade prior to the First World War. So, when war broke out, more Hungarians were living and working in the United States than ever before. Of course, for the sake of preciseness, a distinction must be made between Hungarians (Magyars) and non-Hungarians (e. g. Slovaks, Czechs, Poles, Croatians, Serbs, etc.) from the territory of Austria-Hungary.

Gross migration from the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the First World War can be put at three million people, the majority of which arrived after 1899. Of all Austro-Hungarian immigrants, an estimated one and a half million arrived from the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary.[16] Yet this figure does not show how many Hungarians (by

[14] Bankston, *Encyclopedia*, 533–537.

[15] The data in the chart is based on the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2008, published by the Department of Homeland Security. Bankston, *Encyclopedia*, 507.

[16] Puskás, *Ties That Bind,* 21.

which secondary sources usually mean people who spoke Hungarian as a mother tongue) travelled to the USA in this period with accuracy. According to Hungarian census statistics, only 48.1 per cent of the population living in the Kingdom of Hungary considered themselves Hungarians in 1910.[17] Unlike other eastern European nations, more than 99 per cent of immigrants claiming Magyar as a mother tongue were from the same country. But conversely, only 46 per cent of immigrants from Hungary were actually Magyars.[18]

When it comes to determining how many Magyars were living in the United States during World War One, it is difficult to arrive at an accurate number. The US federal censuses of 1910 and 1920 are certainly helpful, but there are several important factors to be taken into consideration. Firstly, one should examine the flow of immigration to the USA on a yearly basis between 1910 and 1914. The outbreak of the Great War halted immigration – the number of immigrants arriving during the war was negligible so the years after 1914 can be eliminated from the calculation. The yearly numbers of Hungarian immigrants should be added to the results of the 1910 census but the calculation would still not be accurate. This leads us to the second methodological issue. As mentioned before, a sizeable number of migrants sailed to the United States with the intention of working there temporarily. As Steven Béla Várdy, a noted Hungarian American historian puts it:

> They were driven from their homeland by economic privation, and drawn to the United States by the economic opportunities of a burgeoning industrial society. Most of them were young males who came as temporary guest workers with the intention of returning to their homeland and becoming well-to-do farmers.[19]

A not inconsequential number of these individuals repeated the journey several times over the course of a few years. Consequently, to determine the number of Hungarians in the US during the war, it would be necessary to eliminate the occasions of re-migration, which would in essence mean registering every single immigrant worker by name in a database, a task that would prove momentous – even for a research team. According to Julianna Puskás, the numbers involved can be put somewhere around at 1.8 million people.[20]

---

[17] László Katus, *Hungary in the Dual Monarchy 1867–1914*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.), 167.

[18] Roger Daniels, *Coming to America. A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 232.

[19] Steven Béla Várdy, *Magyarok az Újvilágban* [Hungarians in the New World] (Budapest: 2000). 744.

[20] Puskás, *Ties*, 21.

IV. "The Conflict of Loyalties"

Julianna Puskás calls the 1914–1918 period "The Conflict of Loyalties",[21] which could not be more accurate in respect of the Hungarian immigrants living in the USA that time. This split loyalty was not unusual and is similar to what other immigrant nationals faced: they had to decide whether their original ethnicity, or their new, American identity was more important to them.[22] But this was not necessarily a major talking point in the first years of the war, while the US maintained its neutral position in respect to the war. In this period (1914, and a main segment of 1915), a lot of Hungarians felt a sense of responsibility for those remaining in the old country, some others even expressed their patriotism by notifying the Hungarian Embassy of their intention to join the Hungarian army.

What made life very difficult for Hungarian Americans was the fact that they ended up in the crosshairs of both the Hungarian government and American society. The Hungarian government announced that anybody of Hungarian citizenship who worked in American weapons factories or any other military plants were considered enemies of the state of Hungary, and were to be subjected to 10 to 20 years in prison, or even to capital punishment. For instance in South Bethlehem, PA, one Hungarian immigrant described the situation as follows:

> For weeks now the Austrians working here have been troubled by reports scattered broadcast that if they did not stop making shells for the allies, they would be put in prison and, in some cases, be executed as traitors if ever they dared return to their country![23]

Interestingly, after the announcement appeared in Hungarian newspapers in the USA, the number of Hungarians applying for American citizenship grew considerably.[24] Hungarian immigrants also felt the need to help with the old country's war effort and so in several ways. Their associations in the USA organized charity events and bazaars to raise money for medical supplies, which were sent to Hungarian soldiers via the Red Cross. They purchased Hungarian war bonds. They even prayed in their churches for the victory of the homeland, the soldiers' lives, and those remaining in the hinterland.[25] These acts of patriotism towards the Old World by Hungarian Americans most certainly raised some eyebrows among their native-born acquaintances.

---

[21] Puskás, *Ties*, 179.

[22] Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 235.

[23] Dean Halliday, "Ammunition Makers Are Glad Dumba Must Leave," *The Day Book*, (IL) September 14, 1915. 8.

[24] Miklós Szántó, *Magyarok Amerikában [Hungarians in America]* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 63.

[25] Puskás, *Ties*, 179.

Figure 3: Ambassador Dumba[26]

One of the major scandals concerning Hungarians during the course of the war was the infamous Dumba Affair. Konstantin Theodore Dumba (1856–1947) was the last Austro-Hungarian diplomat accredited to serve as Ambassador to the United States. He was in office from March 4, 1913 to November 4, 1915. Dumba, in a letter he had sent to his government, admitted to being part of a scheme that attempted to use strikes and sabotage by immigrant workers to keep American companies from fulfilling their contracts with Allied states.[27] In the documents found by the British Royal Navy, ambassador Dumba had proposed a plan to "disorganize the manufacture of munitions of war" in the United States. As a part of this scheme, Dumba also suggested funding a number of foreign-language newspapers published in America to influence Hungarian laborers. The Wilson administration was naturally outraged by this scheme and deemed it a particularly dangerous attempt to take advantage of the heterogeneous population of the USA.[28] Consequently, Dumba was soon recalled from service.

---

[26] The source of the image: William Seale, *The Imperial Season: America's Capital in the Time of the First Ambassadors, 1893–1918* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2013), 199.

[27] Puskás, *Ties*, 180.

[28] Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes. The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 18.

Prior to this incident, Dumba had been fairly popular among both the Hungarian community in America and the political elite back in Hungary. Several months before his dismissal, the Szeged-based daily newspaper Délmagyarország [Southern Hungary] praised Dumba for his excellent work as Ambassador, and quoted him on the importance of the neutrality of the United States.[29] Another Hungarian newspaper, Esztergom és Vidéke [Esztergom and Its Surroundings] also held Dumba in high esteem, praising a foreword he authored for a Hungarian-American propaganda pamphlet written by Ernő Ludwig, Hungarian Consul for the State of Ohio.[30] On October 26, 1915, with reference to the German newspaper Vossische Zeitung, Délmagyarország wrote that King Franz Joseph awarded a noble title to Dumba.[31] It is worth noting that this news article was published less than two weeks before he was disgraced and took his leave from office. Ironically, Dumba contradicted these flattering articles with his own behavior as Ambassador: he talked about the importance of American neutrality, and yet was the one who attempted to organize a dangerous sabotage that could possibly have been used as a casus belli against Austria-Hungary.

This infamous affair shed an ill light on Hungarian Americans, who, according to newspapers of the time, sought to dissociate themselves from Dumba. Other Austro-Hungarian peoples jumped at the opportunity to take advantage of the situation and use Dumba's case to express their loyalty to America. The Slovaks for example, did not hesitate to send letters to major newspapers, labelling Austria-Hungary an oppressive state and denouncing the activities of Ambassador Dumba.[32] But Hungarians also expressed relief when the ambassador was recalled, Hungarians and Austrians of South Bethlehem celebrated together in the streets.[33]

After Dumba was recalled, Franz Joseph declined to appoint a new Ambassador to the USA, which made Dumba the last Hungarian diplomat to occupy such a high level in America. Dumba went on to serve as an Austrian diplomat for decades after the war. In his memoirs, published in 1932, he attempted to defend his actions in 1915 by sharing his own side of the story.[34]

---

[29] "A monarchia amerikai nagykövete a háborúról" [American Ambassador of the Monarchy Weighs in on the War], *Délmagyarország*, February 23, 1915, 7.

[30] László Kőrösy, "Amerikai honfitársainkról [On Our Fellow Countymen in America]," *Esztergom és Vidéke*, August 22, 1915, 1.

[31] "Dumbát kitünteti a király" [Dumba to be Awarded by the King], *Délmagyarország*, October 26, 1915, 5.

[32] Slovaks' Denounce Dumba, *New York Tribune*, (NY) September 16, 1915, 6.; or Slovak Citizens Praise Dismissal of Doctor Dumba, *The Bridgeport Evening Farmer*, (CT) September 20, 1915, 4.

[33] Halliday, Ammunition Makers, 8.

[34] Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1932).

Similarly to the Dumba-case, American Secret Service agents managed to seize several documents (mostly correspondence) from German and Austro-Hungarian officials, that proved schemes were afoot that aimed to sabotage American factories and shipyards. One example of this was the capture of Dr. Heinrich Albert, a German commercial attaché, who worked for the Hamburg-Amerika line office in lower Manhattan. According to embellished versions of the story, federal agents arrested Albert after an exciting chase through the New York subway. In his briefcase, the agents found plenty of incriminating documents, outlining several German and Austro-Hungarian plots to undermine American neutrality. These plots included, apart from the "usual" proposals to buy American newspapers and publish propaganda, bribe politicians and instigate strikes, plans to commit acts of industrial sabotage. The documents served as evidence that Berlin and Vienna were organizing bomb attacks against American factories in Bethlehem, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, New Jersey, and several other cities where there were large populations of Germans, Austrians, and Hungarians.[35] Obviously, the documents angered the Americans but this anger was aimed mostly at Germany, and the role played by Austria-Hungary was dwarfed by her great ally. Moreover, Germany continued to occupy center stage when, in another set of seized documents, German commercial attaché Franz von Papen called Americans "idiotic Yankees", who should "shut their mouths and better still be full of admiration" for German power.[36] Consequently, journalists hounded Papen from Yellowstone National Park to San Francisco, on a journey which ultimately transpired to be a trip to a meeting where further plans of sabotage would have been discussed.

Based on the Hungarians' economic and spiritual support of their homeland, and incidents like the Dumba and the Albert Affairs, suspicion of where their loyalties lay increased gradually. These acts were not in keeping with President Wilson' efforts to encourage "hyphenated" Americans[37] to embrace their new, American identity and leave behind their old one.[38] These "hyphenated" Americans came by the millions from Southern and Eastern Europe in the three decades prior to the start of the Great War, and typically settled in enclaves where they spoke their own language, ate their national cuisine foods, read their ethnic newspapers, and found support in their community's social organizations. Although, they did retain many of their native traditions, they also adopted key

---

[35] Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 78–79.

[36] Neiberg, *The Path to War*, 79.

[37] Immigrants with multiple identities such as Italian-Americans, or Hungarian-Americans.

[38] See Hans P. Vought, *The Bully Pulpit and the Melting Pot. American Presidents and the Immigrant, 1897–1933* (New York: Mercer, 2004), 94–120.

elements of American culture.[39] Some of the immigrant national groups were expressly opposed to American aggression, and were adamant in their support of neutrality. For example, the National German-American Alliance, the Irish Ancient Order of Hibernians, and other ethnic organizations along with editors of ethnic newspapers joined together to convince the U.S. government to maintain neutrality. Of course, German and Irish American motives were different: the former did not want the USA to fight against their homeland, and naturally, the latter did not want the USA to actively help Britain, their longtime oppressor.[40] On the other hand, several other nationals wished to convince the U.S. government to enter the war as soon as possible, most of whom were originally from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The fear of the enemy within was incessant during the war years reaching its peak in 1917. Based chiefly on the very real provocation activity conducted by German saboteurs, Wilson was actively fearmongering against immigrants. In a speech given before Congress, he said the following.

> There are citizens of the United States, I blush to admit, born under other flags but welcomed under our generous naturalization laws to the full freedom and opportunity of America, who have poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life… Such creatures of passion, disloyalty, and anarchy must be crushed out.[41]

Of course, these fears of an enemy inside were present throughout American society. Consequently, when the USA entered the war on April 6, 1917, the federal government took stern measures to deal with the situation of immigrants from enemy countries. This resulted in such measures as the Espionage and Sedition Acts, the Enemy Alien Proclamation, or the Enemy Alien Act. These sought to introduce certain restrictions against Germans, and later against citizens of their allies. In May 18, 1917, the Selective Service Act was passed, which created the Selective Service System. According to this, all non-citizen males were required to register, but not all were required to serve, and those deemed "enemy aliens" were forbidden to serve.[42] By November, 1917, the USA declared war with Austria-Hungary, too, so all nationals of the Empire (Czechs, Slovaks, Croatians, Hungarians) became "technical enemy aliens", too. Later, after persistent protests from

---

[39] Nancy Gentile Ford, *The Great War and America. Civil-Military Relations during World War I* (Westport: Praeger, 2008), 54.

[40] Ford, *Civil-Military Relations*, 2008. 54.

[41] David M. Kennedy, *Over Here. The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 24.

[42] Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You. World War I and the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.). 31.

Czech and Slovak groups,[43] this approach was changed to the degree that more immigrants were conscripted than their proportional representation in the population.[44]

As for the majority of Hungarian immigrants living and working in America – at least, those of an apolitical persuasion – they tried to retain a level of neutrality. Of course, many from minorities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire engaged in attempts to persuade Americans how their independence movements were in line with the war aims of the United States. In a way, it was a means for them to show that their enemy alien status was only of a technical type. The Magyars on the other hand, did not share the same enthusiasm for opposing Austria-Hungary, or if they did, they did not express it. Most Hungarian immigrants remained silent regarding the war. This situation resulted in the very different treatment meted out Austro-Hungarians than that received by the Germans after the declaration of war with their country of origin. One example for this variance was Wilson's decision to refrain from applying to the subjects of the Dual Monarchy any of the enemy alien regulations levelled against German aliens.[45] This made it possible for Hungarian-born individuals to register for the draft and volunteer to fight in the American military in 1917 and 1918. The federal government was ready to use the military training to better facilitate Americanization. Initially, the Army created "development battalions" in which foreign nationals received instruction in the English language, American history, and government.[46] Later, after witnessing the effectiveness of the Army's Americanization methods, the government in 1918 simplified the naturalization process for men in military service. In this way, the war had a positive influence on American society, by galvanizing assimilation and facilitating the emergence of the new, modern American citizen.

This was something that made volunteering for military service highly desirable for many foreign-born individuals, including Hungarians. In fact, only a small proportion, approximately 22 per cent of Hungarians, requested exclusion from the draft upon registration, and most did so for health reasons, or to support their families. A very small number exempted themselves on ideological/moral grounds citing a "refusal to fight abroad",

---

[43] See Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001) 30–44.

[44] Peter Karsten, *Encyclopedia of War & American Society* (Pittsburgh: SAGE Publications, 2006), 946.

[45] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land. Patterns of American Nativism 1860–1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1988), 217.

[46] Kennedy, *Over Here*, 158.

"don't want to serve", "I am against war", or "exempt fight against brother".[47] But the vast majority of Hungarians were open to registering and possibly serving in the United States Armed Forces in the war. Ultimately, some 3000 Hungarians served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the First World War.[48]

V. Closing Remarks

In conclusion it should be noted that although there were incidents involving Hungarians or Austria-Hungary, the available evidence shows that the American government and American society were focused on their grievances towards Germany, and the Ottoman Empire. Acts such as the attack on Belgium without a proper declaration of war, the mass murder of Armenians, or the provocation of Mexico to attack the USA caused much more outrage than the Austrian attack of Serbia for example, which was the catalyst war in the first place.

Incidents like the Dumba Affair, and several attempts at industrial sabotage, were apparently dwarfed by the number of offences committed by Germany and thus proved to be insufficient to provoke the anger of American society. The federal government and major leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt were concerned with the insidious acts of the German and Ottoman Empires, and this antagonizing narrative could be found in all forms of printed press: newspapers, magazines, propaganda posters, etc. However, specifically anti-Austrian and anti-Hungarian propaganda was insignificant compared to other Central Powers, which is intriguing considering that the war was in effect started by Austria-Hungary. Although Hungarian-born individuals could experience hostility from American society, it was isolated and did not compare to what their German-born counterparts had to endure, especially after April, 1917.[49]

The United States entered the war in 1917 acting as a savior, a strong protector of the weak against the archetypal bully. Americans regarded themselves innocent in that they did not have anything to do with the outbreak of the war, thus regarding themselves morally superior to all the other aggressor countries on both sides. The nefarious bullies were Germany and the Ottoman Empire, but the third Central Power, which despite

---

[47] From the author's original research based on a representative sample of some 1200 Hungarian registrants who filled out Draft Registration Cards in 1917–1918. The database is based on the following record group: US National Archives M-1509 World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards.

[48] István Kornél Vida, "Hungarian Americans" in *Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the U.S. Military. An Encyclopedia*. Vol I, ed. Alexander M. Bielakowski (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 311.

[49] Kennedy, *Over Here*, 67–68.

launching the entire enterprise was not widely regarded as one. Consequently, Hungarian immigrants in America were not considered villainous unlike their German counterparts.

This essay has examined this apparent paradox by outlining the background to this historiographical problem. It is acknowledged that this has been merely scratching the surface of the issues regarding the enemy alien question. Researching the state of all the different minorities living in the United States in the years of the war could, and would deserve to, fill volumes. There have been interesting studies about minorities in Great Britain, Germany, France, and the Ottoman Empire published recently,[50] but unfortunately, Hungarian-Americans were omitted from this research. A detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is hoped that this paper will be the springboard for further research focused on the way Hungarians lived and experienced the Great War as enemy aliens in the USA.

[50] Hannah Ewence and Tim Grady (eds), *Minorities and the First World War. From War to Peace* (London: Palgrave, 2017).

References

Primary sources (archive records, newspapers)

US National Archives M-1509 World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards.

Halliday, Dean. "Ammunition Makers Are Glad Dumba Must Leave." *The Day Book*, (IL) September 14, 1915.

Kőrösy, László. "Amerikai honfitársainkról [On Our Fellow Countymen in America]." *Esztergom és Vidéke*, August 22, 1915.

"A monarchia amerikai nagykövete a háborúról [American Ambassador of the Monarchy Weighs in on the War]." *Délmagyarország*, February 23, 1915.

"Dumbát kitünteti a király" [Dumba to be Awarded by the King], *Délmagyarország*, October 26, 1915.

"Slovak Citizens Praise Dismissal of Doctor Dumba." *The Bridgeport Evening Farmer*, (CT) September 20, 1915.

"Slovaks' Denounce Dumba." *New York Tribune*, (NY) September 16, 1915.

Secondary sources

Blankston, Carl III, ed. *Encyclopedia of American Immigration*. Pasadena: Salem Press, 2010.

Boghardt, Thomas. *The Zimmermann Telegram. Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America's Entry into World War I*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012.

Capozzola, Christopher. *Uncle Sam Wants You. World War I and the Modern American Citizen*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195335491.001.0001

Daniels, Roger. *Coming to America. A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. New York: Perennial, 2002.

Declercq, Christophe. "From Antwerp to Britain and Back Again." In *Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory*, edited by Christophe Declercq and Julian Walker, 94–107. London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137550361_7

Dumba, Constantin. *Memoirs of a Diplomat*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1932.

Ewence, Hannah, and Grady, Tim, eds. *Minorities and the First World War. From War to Peace*. London: Palgrave, 2017. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53975-5

Galántai, József. *Szarajevótól a háborúig. 1914. július. [From Sarajevo to the War. July 1914.]* Budapest: Kossuth, 1975.

Gentile Ford, Nancy. *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001.

Gentile Ford, Nancy. *The Great War and America. Civil-Military Relations during World War I*. Westport: Praeger, 2008.

Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land. Patterns of American Nativism 1860–1925*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988.

Iriye, Akira *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations. Volume III. The Globalizing of America, 1913–1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521382069

Karsten, Peter, ed. *Encyclopedia of War & American Society*. Pittsburgh: SAGE Publications, 2006. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412952460

Katus, László. *Hungary in the Dual Monarchy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Kennedy, David M. *Over Here. The First World War and American Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

MacDonnell, Francis. *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Neiberg, Michael S. *The Path to War: How the First World War Created Modern America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Provost, Tracie. "Spy Games: German Sabotage and Espionage in the United States. 1914–1916." *FCH Annals: The Journal of the Florida Conference of Historians* 22 (June 2015): 123–136.

Puskás, Julianna. *Kivándorló magyarok az Egyesült Államokban 1880–1940 [Hungarian Immigrants in the United States 1880–1940]*. Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982.

Puskás, Julianna. *Ties That Bind, Ties That Divide. 100 Years of Hungarian Experience in the United States.* New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000.

Seale, William. *The Imperial Season: America's Capital in the Time of the First Ambassadors, 1893–1918*, Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2013.

Szántó, Miklós. *Magyarok Amerikában [Hungarians in America]*, Budapest: Gondolat, 1984.

US Bureau of Census. H*istorical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1970*. Washington DC, 1975.

Vida, István Kornél. "Hungarian Americans." In *Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the U.S. Military. An Encyclopedia.* Vol I, ed. Alexander M. Bielakowski, 310–316, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013.

Várdy, Béla Steven. *Magyarok az Újvilágban [Hungarians in the New World]*. Budapest, 2000.

Vought, Hans P. *The Bully Pulpit and the Melting Pot. American Presidents and the Immigrant, 1897–1933*. New York: Mercer, 2004.

Máté Gál

A history of artificial change in the function of sacred spaces in the early 1960s
Case study of nationalization of two Eger chapels[1]

Pro&Contra 2

No. 2 (2018) 25–47.

[1] The writing of this study was supported by the tender titled EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00001. "Kutatási kapacitások és szolgáltatások komplex fejlesztése az Eszterházy Károly Egyetemen (The Complex Development of Research and Services Capacities at Eszterházy Károly University)".

DOI: 10.33033/pc.2018.2.25

Abstract

The study focuses on a local conflict in Eger between the state and the Catholic Church in the 1960s. The nationalization of two chapels (belonging to the Girls' School of the Sisters of Loretto and to the Brothers of Mercy Hospital) started in the summer of 1960 in Eger with the assistance of the State Office for Church Affairs. The collectivization, however, provoked great resistance in the Archbishop of Eger.

Keywords: Catholic Church, State Office for Church Affairs, Eger, collectivization, 1960s

Introduction

During the era of Kádárism[2] those wishing to restrict the appeal and power of the Church tried to prevent the spread of religion but not only through directly targeted administrative procedures affecting priests and the faithful. A few years after the suppression of the 1956 Revolution and War of Independence, in 1958, The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) formulated a new type of church policy different to the previous concepts[3] strongly marked by Stalinism. According to the Resolution of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Political Committee (HSWP) of 10 June 1958, the means, methods and speed of the fight against the "clerical reaction" and the "religious worldview" were distinguished. The socialist system's previous decade demonstrated for those who exercised power how it was necessary to act against the churches and the views they spread. As it was stated in the document, religious denominations would exist in the period of socialism for the foreseeable future, so cooperation was "*necessary*" and "*possible*" between state and church. At the meeting of the PC, János Kádár, the leader of the party, believed that supreme state organs should negotiate with the high priest, thereby strengthening the sense of interdependence.[4] The reaction of the Church, however, was that of a political enemy, and its activity was aimed at overthrowing the state and social order, and thus the fight against it, which was not devoid of administrative methods

---

[2] The term Kádárism is used according to the definition given by János M. Rainer. For more details see: János M. Rainer, *Bevezetés a kádárizmusba* (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet–L'Harmattan, 2011), 138–148.

[3] More details about the church policy of Kádárism: Margit Balogh, "Egyház és egyházpolitika a Kádár-rendszerben," *Eszmélet* 9, no. 34 (July 1997): 69–79. http://www.eszmelet.hu/balogh_margit-egyhaz-es-egyhazpolitika-a-kadar-rendszerben/

[4] Melinda Kalmár: *Történelmi galaxisok vonzásában. Magyarország és a szovjetrendszer 1945–1990.* (Budapest: Osiris, 2014), 156-157.

either, was a "fight for the defense of socialist power"[5] The Resolution of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Political Committee (HSWP) Party Committee (PC) of 22 July formulated stringent guidelines about how to suppress the religious worldview. Regarding the timing of the the "*ideological fight*"[6] the governing authority urged the organs dealing with church and society to be patient, the terms "*patient, prudent*" were given more emphasis in the directive.[7] While "clerical reaction" fell chiefly within the competence of state security[8] and secondly within that of the State Office for Church Affairs (SOCA),[9] the "management" of the religious worldview was the responsibility of social organisations and mass movements as well as state social organisations, educational institutions and the press[10] besides the SOCA. At the meeting of the PC on 22 July, Kádár recognized the use of indirect, scientific methods in the fight against the religious worldview.[11] In reality the atheist state could draw on a wide repository of measures against its rival, and according to the Marxist understanding, pronouncedly old-fashioned and harmful worldview, ranging from forced atheist propaganda and education through discriminatory measures to the continuing nationalisation, even in the Kádár-era, of ecclesiastical buildings functioning as places of worship. With respect to the latter, in the first half of the sixties several successful attempts in Eger can be reconstructed from the sources of the State Office for Church Affairs. The surviving documents suggest that certain urban institutions laid claim to the buildings in question and the office's chief executive of church affairs of Heves County, and ultimately the State Office for Church Affairs, appeared as an active participant in the implementation. As will be clear from the records, the State Office for Church Affairs was ready to pave the way for the implementation of the claims submitted, whereas it hindered all the steps taken by the Archbishop to protect the churches. Besides the reason for the consequent attack on the denominations and faith, the SOCA urged the properties to be taken into state ownership as soon as possible as the chapels in question, which used to be owned by the Sisters of Loretto of Eger as well as by the Brothers of

---

[5] Szilvia Köbel, *„Oszd meg és uralkodj". A pártállam és az egyházak* (Budapest: Rejtjel, 2006), 132.

[6] Margit Balogh and Jenő Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon, 1790–2005. Volume 2.* (Budapest: História–MTA Történettudományi Intézet 2005), 1003.

[7] Balogh and Gergely, *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon*, 1003.

[8] For more details see: Géza Vörös, „Állambiztonság és az egyházak," *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 10, no. 4 (2009): 3–19 http://www.uni-miskolc.hu/~egyhtort/cikkek/vorosgeza.htm

[9] For more details see: Köbel, *„Oszd meg és uralkodj"*, 60–91., Edit Köpeczi Bócz, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége. Haszonélvezők és kárvallottak*, (Budapest: Akadémia 2004), 14–18., Viktor Attila Soós, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal archontológiája. Az ÁEH szervezeti felépítése, nemzetközi kapcsolatai és dolgozóinak pályaképe.* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudomágyegyetem 2014).

[10] Köbel, *„Oszd meg és uralkodj"*, 206–212.

[11] Kalmár, *Történelmi galaxisok vonzásában,* 157.

the Mercy Order were considered noted sites of religious life in Eger. This paper, with the use of detailed case studies, highlights how the rural representatives of the one-party system – in one case specifically for the definite benefit of the worldview propaganda of the state – violated ecclesiastical sovereignty, and attempts to illustrate how they restricted not only the Catholic Church but the freedom of religion of local society as well by their administrative steps taken in their cooperation.

The need for nationalization

In the summer of 1960 Emil Borai,[12] chief executive of church affairs received two letters from some institutions of the county town with the purpose of appropriating some church properties. As willbe explained, both letters were posted to the higher authorities in July 1960, and shortly after to the chief executive of the State Office for Church Affairs in Eger, who forwarded the information first orally and later also in writing to András Madai,[13] deputy head of the department. Although it is not proved unequivocally by the sources, it is possible that the claims were lodged at the behest of the SOCA and the County Council. This hypothesis can be supported by the fact that Borai made a petition to the Office for Church Affairs on 3 July 1960, the date before the two letters arrived, in which he asked for approval to evacuate the former monastic chapels situated in Eger and owned by the state as registered with the land registry.[14] The expropriation of buildings did not happen overnight; it is quite sure that prior to nationalization the chapels belonging to the Girl's School of the Sisters of Loretto and the Brothers of Mercy Hospital in Eger were not given over by the office immediately, so it could happen that a rural party worker encouraged the claimants to submit an application either through an intermediary or in person. With the applications in his hand, Borai could promote his interests more effectively towards the office, however, in light of the sources it is possible to say that due to the determination of the church leadership such actions did not always result in immediate success, either.

Following the report of the chief executive of the church affairs in Eger addressed to the State Office for Church Affairs dated 3 July 1960, on July 23 1960 Ottó Újvári, headmaster of Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School submitted a request to the State

---

[12] For more details of Emil Borai's career see: Máté Gál, "Egy összeférhetetlen vidéki megbízott 1956 utáni karrierje. Borai Emil, az ÁEH egri egyházügyi főelőadójának tevékenysége 1956–1969 között," *Aetas* 32, no. 1. (2017): 121–142.

[13] For more details of András Madai's career see: Soós, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal archontológiája,* 277.

[14] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 57. box 2. item, Emil Borai's letter to Károly Olt of 25 July 1961. 1.

Office for Church Affairs, which was forwarded by István Strbák,[15] head of the Heves County Council's Cultural Department to Emil Borai.[16] The building which hosted the grammar school at 8 Lajos Kossuth Street, Eger, was seized from the Sisters when schools were nationalized in 1949, in 1950 the order was further compromised by the burden of being scattered. However, the chapel belonging to the institute remained open to the faithful while services were held there. The headmaster of the grammar school set his eyes on the chapel and the sacristy, which after nationalization, along with the building of the school were registered in the name of the Ministry of Culture – as was stated in Strbák's covering letter.

It was not by chance that Emil Borai joined the line of those who supported the efforts appropriate the chapel and the sacristy for such a purpose ormore accurately , he joined the queue of its initiators. In spite of the nationalization of the Girls' School of the Sisters of Loretto the school church remained in the hands of the Catholic Church, more precisely in those of the Inner City Roman Catholic Main Parish Church of Eger, thus it remained open to the faithful in the fifties and at the beginning of the sixties. In addition to the secular community, the former order members[17] also attended Mass here. Of the latter it is important to mention the nun Irén Bárány and the student Erzsébet Kövér as they took care of the chapel's affairs, the operation of which was helped by donations. Masses were celebrated by dr. József Tóth,[18] a teacher of theology at that time.[19] In addition to the State Office for Church Affairs the church intelligence of Heves County's State Security also showed a keen interest in the religious life going on there. The chapel attracted the attention of the political police because particularly in the first half of the 1950s – in addition to family visits – it served as an important venue for the spiritual direction exercised by nuns among young people. On the evidence of the documents, the Ministry of Interior had the chapel watched vigilantly even in the Rákosi-

---

[15] István Strbák was head of the Heves County Council's Cultural Department between December 10, 1957 and July 31, 1961. Zita Cseh, "Heves megye tisztikara 1950-1990" in *Heves megye történeti archontológiája (1681–)1687–2000,* ed. Péter Bán (Eger: Heves Megyei Levéltár, 2011), 294.

[16] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item The Takeover of the Chapel an Sacristy Located in the School Building.

[17] Irén Bárány, Etelka Wéber, Magdolna Balázs, Gizella Wolszky, Adrienn Ambrus, Erzsébet Kövér, and Erzsébet Barczy nuns and students of the Sisters of Loretto attended services regularly in the chapel of the convent. ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-11762/2. 129.

[18] Dr. József Tóth (1915–1990) was a teacher of theology in Eger from 1940, spiritual director from 1942, and in 1943 he was appointed a school inspector. In 1948 he was arrested and after being released, he filled the position of bishopric advisor from 1949. Schematism of the Archdiocese of Eger, 1963. 69.

[19] ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-11762/2. 129–130.

era. According to the report of June 12 1952, by an agent with the code-name of "József Kocsis", Gizella Wolszki, a nun provided about "100 children religious education illegally in the chapel of the order's cloister of the Sisters of Loretto two weeks before First Communion".[20] The agent's report was close to reality, the nuns did organise a choir for monks and secularists after 1950, as well as helping children for religious education and for the sacraments. The members of the Cistercian clergy of Eger facilitated the "illegal" educational activities of the former members of the order. The Sisters became the helpers of Imre Debreczeni Sixtus, and after the mysterious death of Debreczeniin 1954, of the monk Mihály Elek Kalász in St. Bernard Parish. Previous research[21] demonstrated that, following Debreczeni's death, the longstanding team of religious teachers was shaken and ultimately personal conflicts led to the dissolution of the group. It was Magdolna Balázs who undertook spiritual leadership for the longest period until her internment in 1958.[22] After the disintegration of the group, the chapel and its sacristy stood in the way of those wishing to suppress the church as it still remained under the supervision of the Sisters and also served as a venue for religious ceremonies. In his report on nationalization, dated December 28, 1961, Emil Borai assessed the previous situation of the building, finding it to be maintained by the nuns "for their own benefit", completely distorting the Sisters' original efforts and concealing their real essence.[23]

Otto Újvári, headmaster of the school gave three reasons for expropriating the chapel and the room:

> 1./ The school does not have a gymnasium and a ceremonial hall. As a result, in the last school year, we could only solve the problem of physical education by using the gymnasium of the Pedagogical College. However, the College cannot do without its gymnasium for the next school year, as it is expanding to be a four-year college. The school does not have a ceremonial hall, either. Consequently, we could organize school ceremonies and events only at the Tiszti Klub (Officers'Club), each time by paying for it and we would be forced to adapt to the Club's time schedule. I note that the students' hostel attached to the school does not have a ceremony hall, either, so it does not have a single room where the pupils could be brought

[20] ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-11762/2. 31.

[21] For more details see Bernadett Wirthné Diera, *Katolikus hitoktatás és elitképzés a Kádár-korszakban. – Az 1961-es "Fekete Hollók" fedőnevű ügy elemzése* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 2012), 227–239.; Bernadett Wirthné Diera, "Az egri "Fekete Hollók"," in *Máról a tegnapról. Képek Magyarország 19. és 20. századi történelméből.* ed. Cúthné Gyóni Eszter, Szilágyi Adrienn, and Wirthné Diera Bernadett (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Új- és Jelenkori Magyar Történeti Tanszék, 2005), 227-238.

[22] Wirthné, *Katolikus hitoktatás és elitképzés a Kádár-korszakban*, 230.

[23] MNL OL XIX-A-21-d 10. box 007-46/1961 The Fourth Quater Summary. December 28, 1961.

> together for a meeting. 2./ The school does not have a language room at all. So we often have to hold language lessons in a part of the corridor designated for meeting with parents. When preparing the timetable, we have great difficulties due to the bifurcating system (sic!) as we do not have a language room. 3./ The introduction of polytechnic education would also require a classroom to be available. The sacristy would be suitable for this purpose.[24]

It is striking that the headmaster of the school simply referred to a lack of space in his argument, while the public education institution claimed the buildings with educational purposes. Regarding the lack of a gymnasium, it must be mentioned that the problem was known to the leadership of the town. The question was also raised in a document entitled "*Report on the Situation of the Physical Education and Sport Movement in Eger and its Main Tasks of the Year 1960*" prepared for the meeting of The Eger City Executive Committee on 19 April 1961. Flórián Magvasi described the anomalies affecting secondary school physical education in the city as follows: "Secondary physical education takes place based on the designated curriculum. Unfortunately, the lack of a gymnasium hinders schools from achieving even better results."[25] The document "On *the Discussion of The Urban Policy Plan to be Submitted to the Party Committe"* was also mentioned at the same meeting of the committee. János Kocsmár,[26] president of the Executive Committee, the agenda rapporteur, placed the expansion of the Erzsébet Szilágyi Girls' Grammar School among "the possibilities of the efforts taken by the socialist system and the city leadership to increase the standard of living of the population". It is interesting that the concept of settlement development did not only highlight the possibility of the putting the chapel to use, as evidenced by the remark in the material. "Note: it seems to be appropriate to realize the expansion by moving the dormitories functioning in the schools from there and establishing new buildings for the dormitories."[27] Presumably Kocsmár wanted to use the dormitory building as a gymnasium as well. Surprisingly enough, Ottó Újvári considered the building of the school church to be suitable for this purpose, but was probably not entirely convinced of the practical implementation of the idea himself; he

---

[24] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item The Takeover of the Chapel and Sacristy Located in the School Building.

[25] MNL HML XXXV-29-3/64. p.u. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of April 22, 1960. A Report on the Situation of Physical Education and Sport Movement of Eger and the Main Tasks for the Year 1960. 2–3.

[26] János Kocsmár was president of the Executive Committee of the City Council between 1 November 1953 and 31 December. 1954. József Bertha and Ferenc Szaniszló, *Heves megye tanácsi tisztségviselői 1950–1990* (Eger: Heves Megyei Levéltár, 1991), 40.

[27] MNL HML XXXV-29-3/64. p.u. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of April 22, The Planning and Politics in Urban Development of the City Council of Eger. 1960–1975. 8.

merely wanted to confirm his claim on the property by flagging an already registered problem. Újvári's letter addressed to the headquarters of the State Office for Church Affairs in Budapest finally reached the chief executive of Heves County on 2 August with the help of Strbák. As a sign of his support István Strbák added the following remark to the headmaster's words: "If your higher authority approves of the closure of the chapel registered in the name of the Ministry of Culture with the land registry and makes it possible, we will use the chapel for cultural educational purposes with the consent of the State Office for Church Affairs."[28]

The plaintive letter of 26 July 1960 from dr. Gábor Osváth, director of the hospital, titled *"The Storage Situation of the Hospital"* provided a genuine reason for the other claim, which arrived somewhat later.[29] It must be added to the event that Osváth wrote about to the Health Department of the Executive Committee of Heves County Council and not to the State Office for Church Affairs, and Osváth – at least in the report described below – did not come up with any ideas for solution. The message of the hospital director was forwarded specifically to Emil Borai, chief executive of church affairs by dr Ferenc Szabó, deputy head physician on August 2. In his assessment of the situation, he gave a report on the newly-refurbished pharmacies and the newly established infusion laboratory section, and the document explained in a relatively detailed way what difficulties were encountered independently of the expansions. According to the doctor, the place proved to be too small for the storage tasks, the placement of the bandage remained unresolved, and the hospital would have needed a warehouse of about 40 square meters for this. The bandage was temporarily placed in the basement of the establishment, but due to the lack of space the prescribed quantity was not purchased. Furthermore, the question of where to store the three-month-stock of medical drugs also became problematic; according to the hospital director, on the date of the letter they were able to store a stock for about a month, so the report also referred to a claim for a dry room of 300 square meters that could be said to be ideal. The problem was further aggravated by the stock of drugs managed by the pharmacy company, which occupied two big wards intended to admit and place approximately forty mentally ill patients. In Orváth's view, this problem could be sold by having a warehouse of between seventy and one hundred square meters.[30]

---

[28] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item The Takeover of the Chapel and Sacristy Located in the School Building.

[29] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item A Report on the Storage Situation of the County Hospital.

[30] A claim for an explosive's storage magazine of about 50 square meters was also mentioned at the end of the letter; however, it is less relevant for our topic. MNL OL XIX-A-21-a 46. box 2. item A Report on the Storage Situation of the County Hospital.

Ferenc Szabó, deputy head physician attached his report to the letter of 2 August that he sent to Emil Borai, and at the same time, proposed a solution for the lack of space. "If your higher authority approves of the closure of the chapel owned by the hospital as registered with the land registry and makes it possible, we will use the chapel for storing medicine, with the consent of the State Office for Church Affairs."[31] Szabó was thinking of the church which belonged to the former monastery of the monks of the Brothers of Mercy Order, situated in Knézich Károly Street, Eger, which, like the chapel in the convent of the Sisters of Loretto, remained open to the faithful even after nationalization.

The literature on the history of the monastery, church and hospital[32] highlighted the cruel fate of the Baroque building. After the nationalization of the 1950s, its furniture was dispersed to the Theological College of Eger as well as to various parishes in the Archdiocese of Eger. [33]

The nationalization of Brothers of Mercy Hospital chapel

On August 6, 1960, Emil Borai sent his two papers on the two churches to András Madai, deputy head of the department, together with several other documents requested by Madai.[34] The assessment of nationalization depended now on the leadership of the State Office for Church Affairs, but it did not go smoothly. It transpired from Emil Borai's report of November that Pál Brezanóczy,[35] apostolic governor had attempted to settle the matter within his own jurisdiction in favour of the church. Borai was particularly annoyed at the resistance, on the one hand, because in his view the case was an accurate judgement in so far as "Brezanóczy's promises are worth nothing", on the other hand, the sources suggest that Pál Brezanóczy routinely tried to gain an advantage in highly important questions by avoiding Borai. In his report of March 23, 1959, the chief executive of church affairs

---

[31] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item, dr. Ferenc Szabó, head physician's letter to Emil Borai.

[32] Of the most current it is worth mentioning the doctoral dissertation of Mária Mónika Lipp written in 2012. The study summarizes, completes, and corrects the research results revealed earlier at some places. Mónika Mária Lipp, *Az egri irgalmasrendi kolostor, templom és kórház XVIII. századi berendezése* (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 2012).

[33] Lipp, *Az egri irgalmasrendi kolostor*, 3–4.

[34] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item, Emil Borai's letter of August 2, 1960 to András Madai.

[35] Dr. Pál Brezanóczy (1912–1972) came to Eger in 1952, where he was vicar of the Hungarian parts of the Ordinarium and Diocese of Szatmár. In 1956 he rose to the rank of a prebendal vicar, from 1959 he was apostolic governor, from 1964 bishop of Eger, and from 1969 archbishop of Eger. The Schematism of the Archdiocese of Eger, 1975. 158.

remarked that the attempt to fill the key positions of the Diocese of Eger with so-called "democratically thinking priests" kept stalling. The main reason for this is that although Brezanóczy was apparently inclined to complete the task, he went to Budapest at the time of the implementation and tried to prevent the ideas of the executive from being realized.[36] In his heart-broken letter coming from the legacy of Imre Miklós,[37] addressed to Károly Olt,[38] president of the State Office for Church Affairs, the chief executive of Eger blames Miklós for this situation, and his successes achieved by means of tricking the apostolic governor, who, according to the chief executive's remarks, maintained a friendly relationship not only with Brezanóczy but also with his cousin Ernő, who lived in Germany.[39]

All indications were that the governor also intended to take similar actions in order to save the two chapels. In his letter written to the Madai Emil, Borai evaluated the plan of the priest as follows:

> Namely he [Paul Brezanóczy – the author's note], agreed with the State Office for Church Affairs that he would vacate the former chapel of the Brothers of Mercy in Károly Knézich Street in February 1961 at the latest, and would give it over to the hospital, the owner as registered with the land registry. At the same time, he asked secretly for reregistration so that he could have a good laugh at our expense declaring that »he is not able to vacate the building as it is church property«. It was a very common method used by the governor, and it requires quite strong attention to be noticed in time.[40]

Although Brezanóczy had in fact asked for the three properties to be recorded in the land registry altogether, the chief executive for church affairs only called the attention of the office to the attempt to reregister the chapel of the Brothers of Mercy Order. He did this because the State Office for Church Affairs and the apostolic governor had up to that point only conducted negotiations about the property in Knézich Károly street, which eventually ended with the agreement mentioned by Borai. At that time, the office did not give an order to the governor that the chapel on the territory of Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School should be vacated.[41] Borai enclosed the letter of 4 November

---

[36] MNL HML XXXV-22/12. group./6. box/57. Church Summary Report, 23March 1959.

[37] For more details of Imre Miklós's career see: Soós, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal archontológiája,* 280.

[38] Olt Károly (1904–1985), president of the State Office for Church Affairs from June 2, 1959 to October 20, 1961. Soós, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal archontológiája,* 286–287.

[39] Emil Borai, October 14, 1959. 5.

[40] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item, Emil Borai's report to András Madai, November 4, 1960.

[41] Emil Borai asked the SOCA for permission for the nationalization of the chapel again on July 25, 1961.

1960 written by the chief pastor, addressed to the Administration Department of the Executive Committee of Eger City Commission as incriminating evidence.

The paper cited above reveals how Brezanóczy attempted to keep the churches mentioned so far and St. Ann's Chapel located at 29 Széchényi street in church use through the Administration Department by evading the State Office for Church Affairs.[42]

> Subject: Reserve of the section of religious service of nationalized church buildings in the land registry.
> When the properties owned by the former Roman Catholic religious orders of Eger were nationalized, the places of worship/churches and chapels on the property were also rewritten into the newly opened land registry. The actual ownership and relationship of use of the churches for their intended purpose were not affected by this measure, and thus the churches continued to remain uninterruptedly in church ownership and use. It appears to be necessary to clarify issues related to the maintenance tasks, and therefore you are kindly requested to settle the right of ownership of the church buildings below in the land registry, i.e. please make a decision about making corrections in the land registry according to the actual ownership of the churches indicated below in accordance with the drawings and land register attached, and notify our authority about it as well.
> The buildings in question requiring settlement in the land registry are as follow:
> 1./ In the lrf (land register file) of No 2824 of Eger, tn 900 (topographical number), the church of the Brothers of Mercy Order in Károly Knézich Károly Street,
> 2./ In the lrf (land register file) of No 10245 of Eger, sn 2 (serial number), tn 65 (topographical number), church in Széchenyi Street,
> 3./ In the lrf (land register file) of No. 797 of Eger, tn 417 (topographical number), the church from the convent of the Sisters of Loretto in Kossuth L. /former Káptalan/street…[43]

In spite of the instructions of the State Office for Church Affairs, Brezanóczy chose a roundabout way, and in his letter written to the Administrative Department he referred to the fact that in essence nationalization did not affect places of worship and - tactically - he requested their settlement in the land registry under the pretext of maintenance tasks. In addition to the above-quoted text request, the chief pastor also attached three schematic drawings, three land registers and three copies of the land registry review to the document. The claims of the apostolic governor were legally funded, and

[42] St. Ann Hospital Church in the Main Street of Eger functioned under the management of the Girl Guides Association of Saint Vincent, i.e. under that of the Sisters of the Mercy Order from 1858 to its nationalization; however, it was not affected by state takeover.

[43] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item, Pál Brezanóczy's letter to the Administrative Department of the Executive Committee of the Eger City Committee, November 4, 1960. Eger.

evidence can be found for it in a source prepared specifically in defence of the chapel of the school for girls. Brezanóczy elaborated on why such "misunderstandings" might have occurred in more detail. The institutions carrying out the nationalization failed to execute the division in the land registry between the so-called external and internal places of worship of the monastic buildings. In fact, the external places of worship escaped nationalization.[44] It is well-known today that the nationalization carried out in several stages did not spare even those properties owned by the church which were not affected by the regulations.[45] The fact that during the collectivization, the properties of monastic orders were taken completely into the ownership of certain state organs and institutions without any division despite the regulations, the fate of the sacred activities going on in the buildings was in essence at the mercy of those wishing to impose restrictions on the church.

Brezanóczy's effort failed to achieve its goal as the state apparatus cooperated effectively at the expense of the Catholic Church at this time, too, in much the same was as many times before. Before answering the Chief Pastor's letter, Tibor Bukta,[46] head of the Administration Department informed Bora of the requests. Bukta must have acted in accordance with the rules of the time, and any management and exchange of property by the churches could only be authorized by the State Office for Church Affairs.[47] "I notify you that the settlement of the ownership right of the church buildings designated in their application is currently not timely based on the information provided by the chief executive for church affairs. If you still wish to settle the land register status, you should also send the consent of the chief executive for church affairs" – said the letter from the head of department.[48] Bukta also attached a copy of the reply of the chief pastor to the chief executive for church affairs and a copy of the document with the previously quoted request sent by Brezanóczy. With the evidence in hand, Borai could reveal Brezanóczy's new "machinations" before the State Office for Church Affairs, which, of course, reinforced the importance of his own job and the priest's "double-game".

---

[44] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 57. box 2. item, Pál Brezanóczy's letter to Olt Károly, August 7, 1961.

[45] For more details see: Attila Horváth, "A vallásszabadság korlátozása és az egyházak üldözése Magyarországon a szovjet típusú diktatúra idején," *Polgári Szemle* 10, no. 1–2 (2014): 310–335. http://epa.oszk.hu/00800/00890/00058/EPA00890_polgari_szemle_2014_1-2_586.htm

[46] Tibor Bukta's appointment was accepted by the Executive Committee of the Eger City Committee of the HSWP on 28 November 1958. MNL HML XXXV-29-3 1. box 32. p.u. The Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Eger City Committee of the HSWP of 28 November 1958.

[47] Horváth, "A vallásszabadság korlátozása és az egyházak üldözése", 310–335.

[48] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 46. box 2. item, Tibor Bukta's letter to the Main Authority of the Archdiocese of Eger November 16, 1960.

According to the "*negotiation and agreement*" conducted by president Károly Olt with the governor, deputy president Imre Miklós and András Madai, deputy head of department, he called on Paul Brezanóczy to surrender the chapel of the Brothers of Mercy Order on 2 February 1961, and the State Office for Church Affairs gave him a respite for this until 15 February 1961. Olt closed his ordinance with the following sentence: "At the same time, I also notified Emil Borai, ministerial commissioner about the content of my letter."[49] Presumably the president intended this as a warning, pointing out to the chief pastor that the handing over of the chapel would take place under the close supervision of the chief executive for church affairs, so further resistance would be meaningless. Pál Brezanóczy responded to Olt's request on 8 February. "I took notice of your much-esteemed notification of 2 February 1961. I have put a stop to holding worship services in the former chapel of the Brothers of Mercy Order and I will place the chapel vacated at the disposal of the County Hospital as far as possible during this month – according to the discussion and agreement with Emil Borai, ministerial commissioner..." – as was written in the reply addressed to the president of the State Office for Church Affairs. Brezanóczy was unable to do anything against the ever-tighter administrative pressure despite of his network of contacts developed during his leadership over the years, and the chapel was handed over for the use of the hospital No 1 of Eger on 1 March 1961. After that, the sacred space functioned as a medical warehouse and archives. The archbishopric started taking stock of the furnishings found in the hospital church in February, the process, dated 13 to 15 February 1961 could be found on the source remaining from the time. Most of the paintings, sculptures and some of the gold objects were delivered to the Theological College of Eger. The other objects were placed in different parishes of the Eger Archdiocese, many were sent to museums.[50] In 1961, there were three bells in the church: the bells named in honour of the Heart of Jesus, the Godly St. Joseph and St. Joseph came into use in a parish due to the change of function.[51] In his report of July 25, 1961, addressed to Olt, Borai diminished the significance of the chapel in a cynical manner, according to his observations the transfer took place "in an orderly manner" "without any remarks made by the faithful".[52]

---

[49] MNL OL XIX-A-21-a 22. box E-14-1/1961 The Handover of the Chapel of the Brothers of Mercy Order of Eger and the Suspension of the Vicar József Mátéffy.

[50] Lipp, *Az egri irgalmasrendi kolostor*, 4.

[51] Lipp, *Az egri irgalmasrendi kolostor*, 55.

[52] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 57. box 2. item, Emil Borai's letter to Olt Károly. July 25, 1961. 1.

The nationalization of Girl's School of the Sisters of Loretto chapel

However, the original purpose of the source quoted above was not merely to report on the handing over of the hospital church of the Brother of Mercy Order, but specifically to settle the status of the chapel belonging to the old monastic school for girls in accordance with the intentions of the state. As was mentioned above, the headmaster of the Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School made an attempt to achieve the expropriation of the building – which failed in spite of all his efforts – first with the support of the chief executive for church affairs, and then behind his back with the support of the head of the cultural department. The chief executive for church affairs repeated his wish by engaging the support of more noted ';assistants': the Heves County Party Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Heves County Council and the Eger City Council. In July 1961 Emil Borai also argued that the chapel was under state ownership and by using the kind of phraseology familiar from the state security records, he said that "besides 10–20 elderly ladies the chapel is not visited by anyone except by the nuns from other parts of the country who maintain their illegal relationships here."[53] After this, he outlined his action plan and the foreseeable effects of the events.

Expecting that the permission will be granted, we are planning to close the church during the school break and open it in winter under the management of the City Council where concerts will be held. In the event of the closure of the room, there may be no interruption in the practice of faith, as there are 18 churches in Eger and the main parish is 40 meters, and the former Church of the Minorites is 60 meters from here, not to mention the others. At the same time, they are not visited by the faithful, either.[54]

By 1961 the plan of expropriation was modified in such a way that after taking over the school chapel the number of classrooms of Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School would not increase, but that of the public educational venues of Eger. However, as far as the future possession and use of the chapel are concerned, in the autumn of 1961 there is discernible uncertainty and conflict between the leadership of the town of Eger and the educational institution. At the meeting of the City Council on 6 October 1961, chairman János Kocsmár mentioned the surrender of the school chapel to the Girls' Grammar school in connection with the social celebrations organised in an atheistic manner. Kocsmár's contribution demonstrates that in addition to the "anti-clerical" commitment the city council's endeavours in relation to the chapel were also fuelled by practical reasons. "We should not agree with this proposal regarding the handover of the

[53] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 57. box 2. item, Emil Borai's letter to Olt Károly. July 25, 1961. 1.
[54] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 57. box 2. item, Emil Borai's letter to Olt Károly. July 25, 1961. 5. 1-2.

church.[55] We cannot place the people in the wedding hall of the City Council any more. We can seat only 10 people. It should be left as a wedding hall."[56]

On August 2, Károly Olt informed Emil Borai that he supported his ambition, and at the same time he wrote a message supplemented by Borai's arguments to Brezanóczy, apostolic governor.

The Heves County Council submitted a request to the State Office of Church Affairs asking for the handover of the state-owned chapel in Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School. As there is another church near the chapel, the closure will not cause a trouble for the Catholic faithful from the aspect of faith. Therefore, the Office agrees with the request of the County Council. I kindly request the Lord Governor to take action that the room in question should be handed over to the County Council by August 20, 1961.[57]

According to the President's intentions, the handover was supposed to take place under Emil Borai's vigilant supervision. Knowing the true picture of the city's religious life and the defaults related to nationalization, Pál Brezanóczy, apostolic governor asked the President of the State Office for Church Affairs in a letter to change the position of the office.

> To my knowledge, the situation in Eger today is the same as it was in 1950; the former monastic churches and chapels serving the religious purposes of the faithful are in fact in church property and use, but the relevant land registry division has not happened until now or at least it has not been implemented by the state. Let me also mention that every place of worship has its regular attenders and they would not be able to endure the cessation of the use of its usual place of worship without a shock. I was obliged to experience this in the case of the chapel of the Brothers of Mercy Order as well, the regular attenders of which were up to a tenth of those of the Chapel of Mary. Moreover, the Chapel of Mary in question is also a historic building, so this also suggests that it should remain for its original goal and purpose. I also wish to notify Mr. President that I also have a personal dedication to the sanctuary together with the faithful of Eger, as this chapel is considered to be a shrine in Eger and its surroundings and therefore I must reveal – without exaggeration, – that the planned measure may cause unrest, indignation, and despair in fairly large crowds of believers. I pay attention to the needs of the City of Eger continuously, especially in the field of urban development and I also support them as far as it is possible. However, in the case brought up I had to put

[55] Kocsmár meant here the fulfilment of Ottó Újvári's claim.

[56] MNL HML XXXV-29-3/3. box/99. p.u. Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of Eger City Committee of October 6 1961. 3.

[57] MNL OL XIX-A-21-b 57. box 2. item, Károly Olt's letter to Pál Brezanóczy, August 2, 1961.

> the matter of the chapel into the proper perspective, and bearing in mind and presenting the interests and emotions of the faithful population of the city, I have to ask that the City Council should disregard its takeover for the sake of the peace of our city.[58]

Thus, the rather critical tone of the apostolic governor's letter proved Borai's malicious statement that the religious community of Eger had put up with the vacating of the hospital church without any shock wrong. In connection with the takeover of the school chapel, however, Pál Brezanóczy drew the attention of the State Office for Church Affairs to the fact that it had much more regular attendees than the church mentioned above. From the chief pastor's sentences it can be concluded that it was not only the faithful population of the county seat, but also people from the surroundings, or even Catholics living farther away visited itto worship.[59] Finally, Brezanóczy also expressed his fears about the use of the historic building for other purposes, because – as he wrote – it could cause great bitterness and outrage among the people, which could disturb the peace of the settlement.

The apostolic governor, who repeatedly took action against the endeavours of the State Office for Church Affairs, finally met the representatives of the Office personally on 17 August 1961; unfortunately, the sources make no mention of who exactly was present and where the meeting took place. The exchange of views could not have taken place without conflict as in his note taken about the event in ink on the back of his letter addressed to Brezanóczy, Olt Károly ordered András Madai to watch also – besides Bodai – the handover of the chapel to the county council on 21 August. Madai's written statement on the document of 1 September 1961 expressing the laconic "I've taken steps" proves that he was supposed to have come to Eger on the day of the handover, and he could have seen for himself that the chapel was surrendered to the state with no resistance. In his fourth quarter report of December 28, 1961 Emil Borai referred to the actions affecting the two chapels among the local successes of church policy. In his report Borai mentioned the renewed function of the school chapel, which, in addition to housing concerts, would become suitable in the future for holding name-giving ceremonies and weddings filled with "*socialist content*", i.e. those that would be organised in concord with the pattern expected in the era.[60]

---

[58] XIX-A-21-b 57. box 2. item, Pál Brezanóczy's letter to Károly Olt, August 7, 1961. 1–2.

[59] It is possible that the faithful coming from other settlements and nuns of the Sisters of Loretto from other places might have provided a basis for the theory of illegal meeting places created by Emit Borai.

[60] MNL OL XIX-A-21-d 10. box 007-46/1961 The Fourth Quarter Summary of 28 December 1961. 5.

The bargaining between the City Council and Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School finally resolved in favor of the county seat. The frustration of Ottó Újvári, headmaster of the school and with it the dispute over the property ownership could have been somewhat dampened by the fact that Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School was also developed with some of the overall allocation of 65 million HUF for the expansion of urban grammar schools in the framework of the so-called "Second Five-Year Plan".[61] That the State Office for Church Affairs finally decided in favour of Eger could have been due to the fact that in 1961 the Heves County Party Committee "took a decision that the local councils should also facilitate the aesthetic development of the place and equipment of social celebrations". "Experience shows that in many cases the atmosphere and emotional impact of church premises have a significant impact on people" – stood in the document of 1964 on the position of "atheistic and anti-clerical propaganda".[62] The chapel as a church building seemed to be an ideal place for organizing "social festivals filled with socialist content". The wedding hall of the City Council was not able to fully perform its tasks due to a lack of capacity, and the church came in especially useful in this situation. The State Office for Church Affairs was delighted to support this type of use, since the building would serve the purpose of the office: it was possible to replace church rituals with "*socialist festivals*" by this. The City Council began the establishment of "*the right circumstances*" in the first half of the 1960s through a continuous process of informing the public. The newspaper of the Heves County Commission of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) and the County Council, *Népújság*, authored an article about the topic, though rather succinctly, for the first time in the section "*Events, News*" of its issue of November 14, 1963. "The chapel of the Sisters of Loretto in Kossuth Lajos Street will be converted into a wedding hall in Eger. 200 thousand Forints will be spent on the conversion works" – this is what the population of the county could read.[63] The city administration seems to have taken care of representation in line with the central intentions, as half a year later, *Népújság* already wrote that there would be "a call for proposals for the members of the Heves County Arts Working Group for the interior decoration of the room."[64]

---

[61] MNL HML XXXV-29-2/1. box /32 p.u. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Committee of the Eger City Committee of the HSWP of 16 November 1961. Discussion of the second five-year plan. 5.

[62] MNL HML XXXV-22/12. group/1. box/20. p.u. The Situation of the Atheist and Anti-clerical Propaganda. Department for Agitation and Propaganda. The report sent to Department for Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the HSWP of 30 September 1964. 12.

[63] Népújság, November 14, 1963. 6.

[64] Népújság, March 1, 1964. 6.

Emil Borai produced a report entitled "*On the Situation of the Churches and Sects of Heves County*" for the State Office for Church Affairs on 16 October 1965. The activities of former monks living in the county were also included in the nineteen-page analysis. At that time the chief executive pointed out the "illegal" function of the chapel again, reaffirming the need for expropriation, and he himself also reported on the reconstruction.

> The leader of the Church Supply Committee functioning in the Archbishopric, dr. Irén Bárány, former headmaster of the Loretto school, with a wide range of contacts all over the country with whom she conducts extensive correspondence, plays an important role in the direction of the monks. The order chapel situated in the nationalized Szilágyi Erzsébet Girls' Grammar School, which they also used for illegal meetings, had been managed by them until the past years. They occasionally met Mária Hajagos, Superior General of Kecskemét and Mária Krigovszki,[65] [sic!] Provincial of Budapest here.[66]

It is almost certain that the Sisters did not lose touch with each other during the period of dispersal, either, so it is not unimaginable that the church served as a meeting venue for them.[67] Borai and the state security may have deduced from their correspondence that in addition to the Cistercians, their educational work with the young was carried out under the "double guidance" of the former prior of the Loretto school and the principal.[68] In his report, Borai finally closed the section about the chapel by presenting the reassuring result for the state authorities. "The chapel of the Sisters of Loretto mentioned before was handed over to the management of the Council, where an extremely glamorous concert and wedding hall[69] is being built."[70] It is a typical expression of the "great opportunities" of weddings in the Kádár era, as the event is a grand, community celebration, and people did not really mind if the institutional system of socialism contributed to its success.[71]

---

[65] MNL HML XXXV-22/12. group./6. box/57. A Report on the Situation of the Churches and Sects of Heves County. 16 October 1965. 14.

[66] MNL HML XXXV-22/12. group./6. box/57. A Report on the Situation of the Churches and Sects of Heves County. October 16, 1965. 14.

[67] Bernadett Wirthné Diera came to a similar conclusion during her research carried out in connection with the case "Black Ravens". For more details see: Wirthné, *Katolikus hitoktatás és elitképzés a Kádár-korszakban,* 230.

[68] ÁBTL 3.1.5. O-11762/2. 351.

[69] For more details about wedding hall see: Népújság, January 28, 1966. 4.

[70] MNL HML XXXV-22/12. group./6. box/57. A Report on the Situation of the Churches and Sects of Heves County. October 16, 1965. 14.

[71] Kalmár: *Történelmi galaxisok vonzásában,* 159-160.

Summary

The reconstructed case studies illustrate amply for us the typical examples of the administrative steps taken by the authorities that affected the Hungarian Catholic Church and the faithful and that could be witnessed even in the sixties. People might have vivid memories of the story of nationalizations concerning real estate due to the nationalization of church schools and the dissolution of religious orders. It is, however, well-known today that this process took place over several stages, and we can find examples that strengthen this proposition even in the consolidation period of the Kádár regime. One of the most important things to notice from the case of Eger is that although the need for state takeover was formulated by certain particular institutions, it also served the purpose of the "struggle" between the state policy on religion and the atheist worldview. Due to the artificial change that took place in the function of sacred spaces the number of sites available for religious society to practice their faith was reduced, while at the same time the modern-style wedding hall converted from a school chapel was supposed to give specifically the wedding ceremonies organized in the "atheist manner" a competitive advantage.

Emil Borai, chief executive for church affairs of the SOCA, who knew his way around the local organizations since he had started his career in 1954, played a prominent role in the chain of cooperation that the authorities conducted in the interest of the state takeover. Due to the attitude of the governor Pál Brezanóczy, who was primarily under his control, Borai might have known from the beginning that it would not be easy to carry out nationalization. However, this circumstance not only highlights the cool relationship and the diplomatic struggles evident between the chief executive and the chief pastor, but also the political acumen of Pál Brezanóczy, who otherwise showed great willingness to cooperate with the state. The apostolic governor did not put up with the handover of the churches which were so important for and popular with religious people, he tried to exploit his extensive contacts as well as locally available opportunities. Despite the reports tailored to the needs of the central leadership the handover of the buildings did not seem to have escaped the outrage of society. In 1990-1991, when the church and school building converted to a wedding hall were returned to the management of the Sisters of Loretto, a debate ensued about the fate of the chapel in the press. The comments of readers, the detailed analysis of which is beyond the scope of this paper, brought to the surface again the grievances that had first occurred nearly forty years prior.[72]

---

[72] For more details see: Máté Gál, "Egri egyházi ingatlanok "állami használatba vétele" az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal közreműködésével a Kádár-korszakban," in *RMJ60. Tanulmányok a hatvanéves Rainer M. János tiszteletére*, ed. Máté Fábián and Ignác Romsics (Eger: Líceum, 2017), 69–93.

References

Sources

Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (ÁBTL) 3.1.5 O-11762/2. Egri Fekete Hollók.
[The *Historical Archives* of the State Security (HASS) 3.1.5 O-11762/2. The Black Ravens of Eger.]

Az Egri Főegyházmegye Schematizmusa, 1963., 1975. [Schematicism of the Archdiocese of Eger]

Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Heves Megyei Levéltára (MNL HML) XXXV-29-3/32.; XXXV-29-3/64.; XXXV-29-3/64.; XXXV-22/12. csoport/1. doboz/20.; XXXV-22/12. csoport./6. doboz/57.; XXXV-22/12. csoport./6. doboz/57.; XXXV-29-3/3. doboz/99.; XXXV-29-2/1. doboz /32. [National Archives of Hungary – Archives of Heves County]

Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL) XIX-A-21-a 22. doboz E-14-1/1961.; XIX-A-21-b 46. doboz 2. tétel; XIX-A-21-b 57. doboz 2. tétel; XIX-A-21-b 558. d. Borai Emil; XIX-A-21-d 10. doboz 007-46/1961. [National Archives of Hungary – Archives of Heves County]

A szerző saját tulajdonában lévő irat: Borai Emil 1959. október 14-ei levele. [A document owned by the author: Emil Borai's letter of 14 October 1959]

Newspapers

Népújság 1958. (Volume 13.) Issue 26.
Népújság 1963. (Volume 14.) Issue 266.
Népújság 1964.(Volume 15.) Issue 59.
Népújság 1966. (Volume 17.) Issue 23.
Népújság 1966. (Volume 17.) Issue 248.
Népújság 1968. (Volume 219.) Issue189.
Népújság 1971. (Volume 22.) Issue 75.

Bibliography

Balogh, Margit. "Egyház és egyházpolitika a Kádár-rendszerben." *Eszmélet* 9, no. 34 (July 1997): 69–79. http://www.eszmelet.hu/balogh_margit-egyhaz-es-egyhazpolitika-a-kadar-rendszerben/

Balogh, Margit and Gergely, Jenő. *Állam, egyházak, vallásgyakorlás Magyarországon 1790–2005*. Volume II. Budapest: História–MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 2005.

Bertha, József and Szaniszló, Ferenc. *Heves megye tanácsi tisztségviselői 1950–1990*. Eger: Heves Megyei Levéltár, 1991.

Cseh, Zita. "Heves megye tisztikara 1950–1990" In *Heves megye történeti archontológiája (1681–)1687–2000*, edited by Péter Bán, 281–303. Eger: Heves Megyei Levéltár, 2011.

Gál, Máté. "Egy összeférhetetlen vidéki megbízott 1956 utáni karrierje. Borai Emil, az ÁEH egri egyházügyi főelőadójának tevékenysége 1956–1969 között." *Aetas* 32, no. 1 (2017): 121–142.

Gál, Máté. "Egri egyházi ingatlanok "állami használatba vétele" az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal közreműködésével a Kádár-korszakban." In *RMJ60. Tanulmányok a hatvanéves Rainer M. János tiszteletére*, edited by Máté Fábián and Ignác Romsics, 69–93. Eger: Líceum, 2017.

Horváth, Attila. "A vallásszabadság korlátozása és az egyházak üldözése Magyarországon a szovjet típusú diktatúra idején." *Polgári Szemle* 10, no. 1–2 (2014): 310–335. http://epa.oszk.hu/00800/00890/00058/EPA00890_polgari_szemle_2014_1-2_586.htm

Kalmár Melinda: *Történelmi galaxisok vonzásában. Magyarország és a szovjetrendszer 1945–1990*. Budapest: Osiris, 2014.

Köbel, Szilvia. *„Oszd meg és uralkodj". A pártállam és az egyházak*. Budapest: Rejtjel, 2005.

Köpeczi Bócz, Edit. *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége. Haszonélvezők és kárvallottak*. Budapest: Akadémia, 2004.

Lipp, Mónika Mária. *Az egri irgalmasrendi kolostor, templom és kórház XVIII. századi berendezése*. PhD dissertation. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 2012.

Rainer M., János. *Bevezetés a kádárizmusba*. Budapest: 1956-os Intézet–L'Harmattan, 2011.

Soós, Viktor Attila. *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal archontológiája. Az ÁEH szervezeti felépítése, nemzetközi kapcsolatai és dolgozóinak pályaképe*. PhD dissertation. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 2014.

Vörös, Géza. "Állambiztonság és az egyházak." *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 10, no. 4 (2009): 3–19. http://www.uni-miskolc.hu/~egyhtort/cikkek/vorosgeza.htm

Wirthné Diera, Bernadett. "Az egri „Fekete Hollók"." In *Mából a tegnapról. Képek Magyarország 19. és 20. századi történelméből*, edited by Eszter Cúthné Gyóni, Adrienn Szilágyi, and Bernadett Wirthné Diera, 227–238. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Új- és Jelenkori Magyar Történeti Tanszék, 2005.

Wirthné Diera, Bernadett. *Katolikus hitoktatás és elitképzés a Kádár-korszakban. – Az 1961-es „Fekete Hollók Katolikus hitoktatás és elitképzés a Kádár-korszakban – Az 1961-es „Fekete Hollók" fedőnevű ügy elemzése*. PhD dissertation, 2005.

Yesmina Khedhir

The Black Male Experience in Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* and *The Beautiful Struggle*

Pro&Contra 2

No. 2 (2018) 49–65.

DOI: 10.33033/pc.2018.2.49

Abstract

Since the publication of his autobiographical essay *Between the World and Me*, the African American writer and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates has garnered a wide readership as well as considerable recognition. Both in *Between the World and Me* (2015) and in his earlier memoir *The Beautiful Struggle* (2008), Coates traces his own experience as a black male growing up in a poor black neighborhood in West Baltimore. In his work, Coates tackles the major problems faced by black men in today's America, especially poverty, mass incarceration, drug addiction and dealing, urban violence and police brutality. He contends that the present predicament of black people, and black men in particular, can only be understood in light of the continuous dehumanization, marginalization, and destruction of black bodies. The paper aims to examine Coates' experience as a black male and to argue that despite his overt pessimism, Coates challenges hegemonic notions of black masculinity and subverts stereotypes about African American men by becoming a caring father and a conscious intellectual.

Keywords: Ta-Nehisi Coates, autobiography, black masculinity, black body, manhood

Since the publication of his autobiographical essay *Between the World and Me* (2015) written as a letter to his fifteen-year-old son, the African American writer and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates has garnered a wide readership as well as considerable recognition. Both in his earlier memoir *The Beautiful Struggle, A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood* (2008) and in *Between the World and Me*, Coates traces his own experience as a young black male growing up in a poor black neighborhood in West Baltimore. While *The Beautiful Struggle* focuses on Coates's childhood and his relationship with his family, his father in particular, *Between the World and Me* centers around the writer's adulthood alternating between the voices of Coates the author, Coates the son, and Coates the father. By opting for autobiography and memoir in communicating the black lived experience, Coates seeks not only to establish proximity with the reader, but also to anchor his works in an authentic African American literary tradition. Autobiography as a literary genre has been used by major canonical black writers. Starting mainly with slave narratives, autobiography has represented a means to report and provide real historical accounts of black lives pre- and post-emancipation, and more importantly to assert the black self and identity by giving agency and authority to the writer upon his/her own story and narrative. For instance, Toni Morrison in her article "The Site of Memory" underscores the significance of autobiography and memoir as an African American literary heritage and contends that the personal recollections of Frederick Douglass, Olaudah Equiano and Harriet Jacob (Linda Brent), among others, played a crucial role in exposing the evils of slavery, as well as in as-

serting the humanity, "nobility" and "high-mindedness" of the writers.[1] In the same vein, contemporary autobiographies and memoirs by male and female black writers contribute significantly to asserting the persisting legacy of slavery and Jim Crow, to exposing modern forms of racism and discrimination and to highlighting the continuing resistance and struggle among black individuals. In keeping with this African American literary tradition, Coates makes use of his own memories and reflections to communicate the experience of other black people, and especially other black men, in their struggle against the persisting legacies of racism and slavery in today's America.

Coates's books are full of anger, desperation and pain over the fact that black Americans continue to be the victims of American white supremacy and of the American Dream which was achieved, as Coates states, "through the pillaging of life, liberty, labor, and land; through the flaying of backs, the chaining of limbs, the strangling of dissidents; the destruction of families; the rape of mothers; the sale of children; and various other acts meant, first and foremost, to deny you and me the right to secure and govern our own bodies."[2] Coates argues that the physical and psychological destruction of the black body is white America's primary policy, past and present, for asserting its power and dominance. However, through resistance and self-education, Coates promotes an alternative and progressive model of both blackness and masculinity[3] by challenging hegemonic notions of black masculinity[4] and subverting stereotypes about African American men by becoming a caring father and a conscious intellectual.

---

[1] Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, ed. William Zinsser (Boston–New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), 83–88.

[2] Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015), 8.

[3] In her book *Progressive Black Masculinities*, Anetha D. Mutua explains that "[P]rogressive black masculinities are unique and innovative practices of the masculine self actively engaged in struggles to transform social structures of domination" (xi), that is black men, like black women, face and challenge different systems of oppression because both of gender and race. These gendered and racialized systems of domination often classify black men as either irresponsible/absent fathers or as criminal and dangerous individuals.

[4] This point has also been taken and explained in a master's dissertation titled "Re-Presenting Black Masculinities in Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World And Me* by Asmaa Aaouinti-Haris. Though the dissertation deals also with Coates's subversion of hegemonic stereotypes about black men and his promotion of a progressive model of masculinity, the textual analysis is restricted to Coates's *Between the World and Me* (thus it does not address Coates's father as an influential model of black masculinity) and does not focus on the corporeal representation of the black male experience (the image of the destroyed black body) as well as on Coates's intellectual struggle.

In her seminal book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander argues that "[t]oday mass incarceration defines the meaning of blackness in America: black people, especially black men, are criminals. That is what it means to be black."[5] Alexander contends that the US criminal justice system and law are used as tools to detain and incarcerate as many as possible of particularly black males. She also claims that the constant criminalization of African American communities comes as a reaction to the civil rights and progress gained by black people during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Mass incarceration and the prison system are for Alexander the primary means for relegating blacks to a second-class position. Similar to Alexander's, Coates's books have been published in the midst of an epoch characterized by increasing police violence towards black people, as well as a surge in their numbers in the prison system. In his works, Coates affirms that institutional racism is a fact and that the justice system does not function in isolation from the country, but is a mere reflection of its racist policy when he claims that "[t]he truth is that the police reflect America in all its will and fear, and whatever we might make of this country's justice policy, it cannot be said that it was imposed by a repressive minority."[6] For Coates, America's fear of losing its power continues to trigger its will and nourish its legacy of "destroying the black body."[7]

Coates structures his essay *Between the World and Me* around an image that he describes as "so common" and "so old" to black people: the image of the destroyed black body. Like Ralph Ellison who starts *The Invisible Man* by asserting the invisibility of the protagonist's black body, Coates begins his essay by stressing the loss and destruction of his own body:

> Last Sunday the host of a popular news show asked me what it meant to lose my body. The host was broadcasting from Washington, D.C., and I was seated in a remote studio on the far west side of Manhattan. A satellite closed the miles between us, but no machinery could close the gap between her world and the world for which I had been summoned to speak.[8]

This notion of the disembodiment and destruction of the black body is a recurrent trope throughout the book. For Coates, the black body has always been the target of American white supremacy. He claims that "[i]n America, it is a tradition to destroy the black body— it is a *heritage*."[9] The words "tradition" and "*heritage*" assert both the

---

[5] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*: *Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 192.

[6] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 79.

[7] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 9.

[8] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 5.

[9] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 103.

historicity (in the sense of actuality and factuality) of the black body destruction and the ritualized repetitive nature of the practice. The destroyed black body could be interpreted in this sense as a site of "national historical memory" which symbolically links the past to the present.[10] The enslaved body, lynched body and incarcerated body are three historical moments, distanced in time yet very closely related in African memory space. The destroyed body becomes thus a carrier of American history and memory and a testimony for its violence. Starting from slavery, through Jim Crow, up to current mass incarceration, Coates argues, America's policy of instilling fear and castrating the black body has aimed at gaining social control and asserting white dominance. In fact, this corporeal link between the past and the present is embedded in the essay's title itself. Coates's book *Between the World and Me* is named after a poem of the same title written by Richard Wright depicting a horrifying scene of lynching and documenting the atrocities inflicted upon black bodies. By choosing "Between the World and Me" as a title to his book, Coates seems to suggest that the lynching image drawn by Wright in his poem is as valid today as it was in the past.

In *Between the World and Me* Coates argues that the physical, mental, and social destruction of the black body has created a sense of incapability, powerlessness, and fragility among African Americans when he affirms: "The Conscious among us knew that the whole race was going down, that we'd freed ourselves from slavery and Jim Crow but not from the great shackling of minds."[11] The present for Coates cannot be detached from the past because the former is a mere continuation and outcome of the latter. As a black man, Coates's feeling of being psychologically and socially emasculated and wounded reverberates throughout his letter to his son, as he claims: "I am wounded. I am marked by old codes, which shielded me in one world and then chained me in the next."[12] Although Coates has never experienced slavery, Jim Crow or incarceration, he feels crippled and shackled by its memory. The undying traumatic effect of America's brutal history cannot be avoided because it inhabits the minds of black Americans and haunts their consciousness. The psychic wound is so deep and profound that it continues to bleed discreetly but incessantly, affecting how blacks perceive themselves and others. This cultural trauma is transmitted from one generation to another, so is the sense of being destroyed, emasculated and afraid, as Coates explains addressing his son: "And I am

---

[10] James B. Haile III, "Ta-Nehisi Coates's Phenomenology of the Body," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 31, no. 3 (2017): 494. (https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jspecphil.31.3.0493)

[11] Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle: a Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2008), 44.

[12] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 103–104.

afraid. I feel the fear most acutely whenever you leave me. But I was afraid long before you, and in this I was unoriginal. When I was your age, the only people I knew were black, and all of them were powerfully, adamantly, dangerously afraid. I had seen this fear all my young life."[13] Coates suggests here that the destiny of black people is to live under a constant feeling of fear, fear about their own security and the security of their children and families. Subject to different forms of physical torture and punishment during slavery and Jim Crow, and to other forms of "frisking, detaining, beatings, and humiliation"[14] in today's America, black Americans remain trapped in a vicious circle of fear and impending danger. This collective feeling of fear affects how black males constitute their identity, define their masculinity, and engage in their social life. Coates's struggle as a black man consists of building his own personality and asserting his own identity against and within this overwhelming sense of fear. His struggle is triggered by a troubling question that he sets for himself, which is: "How do I live free in this black body?"[15] Contrary to Baldwin's understanding of blacks' freedom as depending on a change in white people's perception and acceptance of black people when he claims that "[w]e cannot be free until they [white people] are free,"[16] Coates contends that freedom should, in fact, be sought internally, in the black body itself, in blacks' history and blacks' definition of being and blackness. In other words, the answer to Coates's question should be the outcome of a self-reflective and self-indulging journey. Indeed, though Coates's journey from childhood to adulthood might be different than other black males', it certainly reflects some of the most common challenges and social constraints faced by the majority of black men growing up in a white-dominant society.

Bell Hooks maintains that African American males "are victimized by stereotypes that were first articulated in the nineteenth century but hold sway over the minds and imaginations of citizens of this nation in the present day."[17] Two of these dominant stereotypes are the absent father and the violent and criminal black male. In his works, Coates subverts these stereotypes and provides an alternative model of the successful black male as he traces his path towards manhood both as a father and as a writer / intellectual. Three main factors have characterized and determined Coates's "road to manhood": the streets of Baltimore which symbolize violence, fatherhood, i.e., Coates's father William Paul Coates and Coates himself being a father, which symbolizes love and responsibility,

---

[13] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 14.

[14] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 9.

[15] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 12.

[16] James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (London: Michael Joseph, 1963), 21.

[17] Bell hooks, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (New York–London: Routledge, 2004), x.

and finally Coates's Mecca, Howard University, which symbolizes consciousness and intellectual progress.

Coates was born and raised in West Baltimore in a poor black neighborhood during the "Crack Age" where guns, violence and black-on-black crime were rampant. In explaining the relationship between masculinity, race, and violence, Gail Garfield argues that "[t]he violent-black-male image and one of its contemporary derivations, the criminal-black-male, were formed during slavery. […] Under slavery black men were 'forced to steal food and clothing to survive, forced to lie in order to cultivate reading and writing skills, forced to deceive in order to associate with the master class.'"[18] Here, the connection between the past and the present is inevitable for understanding the current plight of the black male subject. The contemporary image of the criminal black man finds root in an older image assigned to blacks with a complete denial of the context in which it originated. Similarly, Coates provides a justification and explanation for black males' endorsement of violence when he claims:

> The crews, the young men who'd transmuted their fear into rage, were the greatest danger. The crews walked the blocks of their neighborhood, loud and rude, because it was only through their loud rudeness that they might feel any sense of security and power. They would break your jaw, stomp your face, and shoot you down to feel that power, to revel in the might of their own bodies.[19]

The black male's sense of fear, powerlessness, and emasculation is turned to rage to compensate for an inner sense of fragility, weakness, and vulnerability. In addition, a certain longing for power, security, and control over their own bodies push black males to adopt the language of violence. Undoubtedly, Coates is not justifying criminality or violence, but hinting at some of its roots. After all – he seems to imply – this is the language with which blacks have continuously been addressed and treated. By internalizing the language of their oppressors and transforming their fear into another form of violence, black men become themselves a source of danger, not only to whites but to other black men (and women) as well. In this regard, bell hooks claims that "male violence is a central problem in our society. Black male violence simply mirrors the styles and habits of white male violence."[20] Similarly, Garfield argues that the understanding of violence as

---

[18] Gail Garfield, *Through Our Eyes: African American Men's Experience of Race, Gender, and Violence* (New Brunswick–New Jersey–London: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 16.

[19] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 22.

[20] hooks, *We Real Cool*, 61.

a crucial component of black masculinity is based on a white supremacist and patriarchal definition when he claims that:

> [D]uring slavery, manhood was linked to whiteness, and, in turn, whiteness was linked to social power.... The ability of White men to whip and kill Black men at will and force them to witness violence against their female partners and children served not just as a tool of racial control, but violence also became deeply embedded in the very definition of masculinity.[21]

Despite trying to interpret and elucidate the causes behind the criminal and violent black male image, Coates asserts his resentment of violence and defines himself and his understanding of black masculinity against it when he claims:

> I have never been a violent person. Even when I was young and adopted the rules of the street, anyone who knew me knew it was a bad fit. I've never felt the pride that is supposed to come with righteous self-defense and justified violence. Whenever it was me on top of someone, whatever my rage in the moment, afterwards I always felt sick at having been lowered to the crudest form of communication.[22]

By refusing to adhere to hegemonic notions of masculinity such as aggressiveness, violence and hypermasculinity, Coates promotes a progressive model of black masculinity and hence counters stereotypes associated with the black male subject. By negating the use of violence in his embodied discourse of the black male experience, Coates's offers an alternative representation of black manhood translated both in fatherhood and the intellectual struggle.

A Vietnam veteran, a former Black Panther, a black Nationalist who later adopted Afrocentism, William Paul Coates was a great influence on his sons, Coates in particular. Despite describing him as "flawed," "tough," and "fascist,"[23] Coates feels grateful for the "blessing" of the presence of his father and acknowledges his significant contribution to the formation of his identity. The following are some of the phrases used by Coates to describe his father: "Dad was at war with his destiny. He was raising soldiers for all terrain. He preached awareness, discipline and confidence"[24]; "When I was young, my father was heroic to me, was all I knew of religion"[25]; "Dad mostly thought of survival....

---

[21] Garfield, *Through Our Eyes*, 18.
[22] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 65.
[23] Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle,* 20.
[24] Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle*, 20–21.
[25] Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle*, 205.

Dad was responsible for a commune."[26] As a Black Panther, William Paul Coates defines and understands the black male as a "warrior," a "soldier" always-already at war with his society, with the other and with his own self. He led a sober and strict life and adopted the Black Panther's ideals in raising his sons, particularly self-determination, self-defense, and responsibility. Driven by fear and anxiety to lose his child to the street, to jail or to drugs, William Paul Coates beats his son, Coates, if someone steals something from him; if he loses his keys or if he does not fight back when attacked. He emphasized the need and destiny to struggle for the black man. For him, born into a world defined by white standards, the black male's destiny is to fight to find a place, to survive and to be a man. In these terms, the black male comes into this world with the burden of responsibility, for himself, for his family and for his community. Thus, for Coates, initiation into manhood came at an early age. As a boy, he describes himself as the "child-man," placed somewhere between the innocence of a child and the maturity of a man. Coates's "road to manhood" came with a cost, that of missing a good part of his life, his innocence, his childhood. He declares "[e]ven after I got conscious, I'd felt I'd been robbed of time, that I had been isolated from a series of great childhood events."[27] Coates's relationship with his father was a mixture of "hatred and complete reverence."[28] For William Paul Coates, to be a man is to be tough, disciplined, and "Conscious." Consciousness means to educate oneself, to know black history, and to endorse and celebrate black culture and heritage. Thus, he insisted on educating his children and cultivating their knowledge of African American culture by pushing them to read Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Richard Wright, and Baldwin. Though Coates feels grateful to his father for making him a "Conscious" man and for saving him from the streets, violence, and drugs, he wanted to be a different father and to raise his child with more love.

Unlike his father, Coates's model of fatherhood is built on the ideals of love, tenderness, and softness. Coates chooses to raise his son away from "toughness" and the burden of responsibility that black boys are born with. Addressing his son, he declares: "I have no desire to make you 'tough' or 'street,' perhaps because the 'toughness' I garnered came reluctantly. I think I was always somehow aware of the price."[29] Coates wants to trace another future for his son, a future that is not shaped by fear and the urgent need to protect his body. However, by writing a letter with an overt pessimistic voice laced with an overwhelming sense of fear, Coates ends up transmitting to his son the traumatic feeling

---

[26] Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle*, 78.
[27] Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle*, 207.
[28] Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle*, 20.
[29] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 24.

he felt in his own father and encountered in all the books he read and the kids he grew up with in his poor neighborhood in West Baltimore. He tells him: "I did not want to raise you in fear and false memory. I did not want you forced to make your joy and blind your eyes. What I wanted for you was to grow into consciousness. I resolved to hide nothing from you."[30] Yet, by insisting on the importance of consciousness (knowing black history) and on the inevitability of the struggle, Coates ends up tracing the same path for his child that his father traced for him.

Despite distancing himself partly from his father's ideal of the revolutionary, tough and insurgent black man, Coates has a similar understanding of the conventional patriarchal role of a father. By insisting on the importance of being a good father and feeling an urgent need as "the father of a black boy […] and the husband of a black woman"[31] to protect his child and his wife, Coates seems to suggest that the black man has a double responsibility as a father because of his skin color. He warns his son: "'You have to man up,' we tell our sons, 'Anyone can make a baby, but it takes a man to be a father.'"[32] Coates here makes a connection between the true sense of masculinity and responsibility as a father and perceives the lack of masculine parental authority and the absence of fathers as fundamental to the problem of urban black communities. By presenting fatherhood as a crucial component of the ideal black man, Coates seems to suggest that racial uplift needs socially responsible men.

The third and last factor of significant contribution to Coates's "road to manhood" is Mecca: Howard University, which symbolizes knowledge and the intellectual struggle for Coates. As a student, Coates spent most of his time at Howard's library excavating the great works of African American history and literature. Pushed both by his father and by his own curiosity to know more about the African American history, literature, art, and culture, Coates's consciousness was alerted to the beauty of African American culture. He claims:

> I knew that I was literally walking, in the footsteps of all the Toni Morrisons and Zora Neale Hurstons, of all the Sterling Browns and Kenneth Clarks, who'd come before. The Mecca – the vastness of black people across space-time – could be experienced in a twenty minute walk across campus. […] Through the Mecca I saw that we were, in our own segregated body politics, cosmopolitans.[33]

---

[30] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 111.
[31] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 124.
[32] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 66.
[33] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 41–42.

In a rather similar way to Malcom X's hajj "serv[ing] to authenticate the self spiritually, culturally, and socially,"[34] Coates, through his search, discovered the complexity of the African American identity, its "fractal structure"[35] and "double-consciousness,"[36] as demonstrated respectively by Paul Gilroy in his book *The Black Atlantic* — asserting the transnationality and transculturality of the African American identity — and in Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* — showing that the black subject experiences a sense of displacement and inability to fit into two different cultures: the African American and the American cultures. By studying the African American identity, Coates understood that to be black in America is to be at the same time inside, and outside, whole and part, American and African, Caribbean and European. In fact, the complexity, multipolarity and transnationality of the African American identity are, for Coates, the very source of its beauty, "historical and cultural, incarnate."[37] Here, Coates seems to suggest that the answer to his profound question "How do I live free in this black body?"[38] is that by acknowledging the beauty of that black body, by endorsing its blackness and seeing the best and most cheerful part of it, despite all the pain and trauma that that black body carries. By stressing the need to recognize the beauty of the African American physical and cultural body, Coates refers indirectly to the "Black is beautiful" cultural movement that swept the US in the 1960s and echoes Malcolm X (in his speech "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself")[39] who is one of the most influential and inspirational figures in Coates's intellectual struggle.

Malcolm X is the symbol of the free-black-man for many young black men and women. He symbolizes freedom and manliness. Elridge Cleaver devoted a whole chapter to the memory of Malcolm X and quoted Ossie Davis in his eulogy of Malcolm: 'Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood. This was his meaning to his people."[40] Bell hooks claims: "Malcolm X embodied black male refusal to allow his identity to be defined by a system of race, gender, and class domination. He was the example that young

---

[34] Péter Gaál-Szabó, "'Mold[ing] people of all colors into one vast family:' Malcolm X and Interculturation." *Eger Journal of American Studies* 14 (2014): 38.

[35] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London–New York: Verso, 1993), 4.

[36] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk,* ed. Brent Hayes Edwards (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.

[37] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 49.

[38] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 12.

[39] Malcolm X, "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself," filmed May 5, 1962, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kboP3AWCTkA ("Who taught you to hate the color of your skin? Who taught you to hate the texture of your hair? Who taught you to hate the shape of your nose and the shape of your lips? Who taught you to hate yourself from the top of your head to the soles of your feet? Who taught you to hate your own kind?").

[40] Elridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1992), 84.

black folks in the sixties followed as we struggled to educate ourselves for critical consciousness."[41] Similarly, For Coates:

> The best parts of Malcolm pointed the way. Malcolm always changing, always evolving toward some truth that was ultimately outside the boundaries of his life, of his body. I felt myself in motion, still directed toward the total possession of my body. […] Malcolm spoke like a man who was free, like a black man above the laws that proscribed our imagination. I identified with him.[42]

Coates explains that his identification with Malcolm X should not be understood as a love or preaching of violence. He loves Malcolm because Malcolm is not overwhelmed by fear like all the black men he encountered both as a child and as an adult, because Malcolm is in control of his own body, unlike all the other black men, unlike Coates himself. Shortly, Malcolm represents, for him, the example of the ideal black man and leader of the sixties that black Americans need the most in the twenty-first century.

Coates's road to manhood was determined by several factors, fatherhood, his life in Baltimore and his intellectual experience at Howard University. Throughout his journey from childhood to adulthood, Coates learned a lesson he saw as a young boy in his own father: the inevitability and importance of the struggle for black people. The struggle for Coates is not in fighting white supremacy, but rather in questioning, knowing and endorsing the beauty of the African American culture and identity. Thus, he qualifies it as the "Beautiful Struggle":

> If my life ended today, I would tell you it was a happy life – that I drew great joy from the study, from the struggle to which I now urge you. You have seen in this conversation that the struggle has ruptured and remade me several times over – in Baltimore, at The Mecca, in fatherhood […] the changes have taught me how to best exploit that singular gift to study, to question what I see, and to question what I see after that, because the questions matter as much, perhaps more than, the answers.[43]

Coates's struggle is an intellectual one. It could be defined as both the struggle of a black man and of a black writer. By invoking and endorsing the entire history of black culture and seeing beauty in all the literary figures and art movements that helped shape black culture and identity (slave narratives, Harlem Renaissance, Afrocentrism, Black Power, Black nationalism, Black Panthers, Black Muslims, and Civil Rights movement, etc.), Coates

---

[41] hooks, *We Real Cool*, x.

[42] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 48–49.

[43] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 115–116.

seems eager to find his place as a writer among them, yet this also reveals a certain nostalgia for the past despite all its traumatic memory. A certain feeling of being lost that followed the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s is implied in Coates's essay. Ellis Cose explains this when he contends that "[m]any of us are lost in this America of the twenty-first century. We are less sure of our place in the world than our predecessors, in part because of our options, our potential choices, are so much grander than theirs. So, we are trapped in a paradox."[44] In the so-called post-racial era, blacks' dilemma is that although they have better chances at succeeding, they feel shackled and crippled by the continuing legacies of the past, by the traumatic memory that constitutes, ironically, at the same time the very source of their pain and pride. The paradox here is that by forgetting a painful past and endorsing a progressive present, black people would betray their ancestors and lose the true meaning of struggle, hence their identity and sense of existence. And by keeping the memory of the past alive, they would remain prisoners of a trauma that will continue to determine their present; no matter how great the progress is. In relation with this, Coates emphasizes the importance of remembering and the danger of forgetting. Warning his son against forgetfulness, Coates says:

> Never forget that we were enslaved in this country longer than we have been free. Never forget that for 250 years black people were born into chains—whole generations followed by more generations who knew nothing but chains. You must struggle to truly remember this past in all its nuance, error and humanity. […] You cannot forget how much they took from us and how they transfigured our very bodies into sugar, tobacco, cotton and gold.[45]

Because collective and cultural memory is essential for ensuring the continuity and coherence of the African American identity and because "memory reactivated has the facilitating power to point into new directions of self-conceptualization; even if containing and displaying cultural trauma, it can also offer modes to rework it,"[46] Coates insists on transmitting the memory of the past with all its "nuance, error and humanity" to the next generations. Also, as a black subject, Coates feels a "duty to remember" by which he "'keeps alive the memory of suffering over against the general tendency of history to

---

[44] Ellis Cose, *The Envy of the World: on Being a Black Man in America* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2003), 11.

[45] Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 70.

[46] Péter Gaál-Szabó, "Cultural Memory and Countering History Through Memory in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Sermons," in *Intertextuality, Intersubjectivity and Narrative Identity* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2017), 87.

celebrate victors'"[47] and creates a counter-narrative by which he revises dominant narratives and honors his ancestors. Thus, the struggle that Coates calls for is the struggle to transmit the African American cultural memory, to nurture it and to seek freedom for the destroyed body by resisting forgetfulness while appreciating blackness.

In his two autobiographical books, *Between the World and Me* and *The Beautiful Struggle*, Coates depicts his own experience as a black male and his journey from childhood to manhood. His experience is undoubtedly different than the experience of other black males, but it certainly reflects what it means to be a black man in today's America. Coates exposes some of the major problems and challenges facing black males today, especially in poor urban communities, namely absent fathers, police brutality, the random killing of young black males, and high incarceration rates. Coates's journey to manhood was different than most of the black children of his neighborhood. Because Coates has a father who saved him from the streets, who pushed him to read, to grow into consciousness, and to engage in a meaningful struggle for knowing and embracing black history and culture, he became a good father and a "conscious" intellectual, proud and aware of the true meaning of his African American identity. By performing a different and progressive model of masculinity, Coates challenges the hegemonic ideals associated with black men and subverts contemporary and mainstream stereotypes that represent black men as irresponsible fathers and dangerous criminals.

---

[47] Barbara A. Mitzal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 146.

References

Alexander, Michelle. *New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2796.2009.02206.x

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. London: Michael Joseph, 1963.

Cleaver, Eldridge. *Soul on Ice*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1992.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *The Beautiful Struggle: a Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2008.

Cose, Ellis. *The Envy of the World: on Being a Black Man in America*. New York: Washington Square Press, 2003.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*, edited by Brent Hayes Edwards. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

Gaál-Szabó, Péter. "Cultural Memory and Countering History Through Memory in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Sermons." In *Intertextuality, Intersubjectivity and Narrative Identity*, edited by Péter Gaál-Szabó, 77–90. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2017.

Gaál-Szabó, Péter. "'Mold[ing] people of all colors into one vast family:' Malcolm X and Interculturation." *Eger Journal of American Studies* 14 (2014): 29–40.

Garfield, Gail. *Through Our Eyes African American Men's Experience of Race, Gender, and Violence*. New Brunswick–New Jersey–London: Rutgers UP, 2010.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London–New York: Verso, 1993.

Iii, James B. Haile. "Ta-Nehisi Coates's Phenomenology of the Body." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 31, no. 3 (2017): 493–503. Web. https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.31.3.0493

Hooks, bell. *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*. New York–London: Routledge, 2004. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203642207

Malcolm X. "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself." *YouTube*. Video File. May 5, 1962. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kboP3AWCTkA

Mitzal, Barbara A. *Theories of Social Remembering*. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003.

Morrison, Toni. "The Site of Memory." In *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, edited by William Zinsser, 83–102. Boston–New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Mutua, Athena D., ed. *Progressive Black Masculinities*. New York: Routledge, 2006. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203961438

Dušan Ljuboja

Herder's Ideas and the Pan-Slavism: A Conceptual-Historical Approach

Pro&Contra 2

No. 2 (2018) 67-85.

DOI: 10.33033/pc.2018.2.67

Abstract

The impact of Johann Gottfried Herder on the Slavic intellectuals of the Nineteenth century is well-known among researchers in the fields of history, linguistics and anthropology. His "prophecy" about the future of the Slavs influenced the writings of Ján Kollár and Pavel J. Šafárik, among others, writers who became some of the most prominent figures of the Pan-Slavic cultural movement of the first half of the Nineteenth century. Their influence on Serbian intellectuals, especially on those living in Buda and Pest, was visible. However, this "Herderian prophecy" also came to the Serbian readership indirectly, mostly through the efforts of scholars like Šafárik. The prediction of a bright future for all Slavs was introduced either as original contributions of the aforementioned scholars, or as the translated excerpts of their most famous works. One of the themes presented in the Serbian periodicals was the notion of the "enslavement" of Slavs by Germans and Hungarians in the Early Middle Ages. In order to better understand the meaning of "Herder's prophecy" and its reception and adaptation by the aforementioned Pan-Slavists, this paper utilizes Reinhart Koselleck's writings on conceptual history.

Keywords: Johann G. Herder, Pan-Slavism, conceptual history, Ján Kollár, Pavel J. Šafárik, Serbian periodicals

Introduction

The work *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* by Johann Gottfried Herder was highly influential on what later became the Pan-Slavic movement, especially in the decades prior to the revolutions of 1848. His "prophetic" remarks concerning the future of the Slavs and their general nature were adopted in writings by notable Pan-Slavists ranging from poetry to history, to linguistics and to anthropology. Herder's writings, and especially the sections on the Slavs, were essentially future-oriented, which explains the reception they received from various Slavic intellectuals. In what follows, I attempt to interpret Herder's writings on the Slavs within the framework of Reinhart Koselleck's understanding of historical time.

The impact that Herder had on both the Pan-Slavic movement, and the region of Eastern and Central Europe in general, in terms of language and emerging nationalisms, has been explored by a number of authors. István Berend argues that Herder introduced a concept of "cultural-linguistic nationalism" which played a prevalent role in the region of East-Central Europe. As well as inspiring the Slavs by exalting them and their potential future, he also admired the Hungarians, while predicting their assimilation

into the surrounding nations.[1] This potential "death of nation," known in Hungarian as *nemzethalál*, was a topic of discussion among Hungarian scholars of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries. In his article *"Herder hamis próféta." Kazinczy és a nyelvhalál* ["Herder is a false prophet." Kazinczy and the language death] Sándor Hites describes Ferenc Kazinczy's, the noted Hungarian poet, linguist and language reformer, reaction to Herder's "prophecies" regarding the Hungarian language (and, subsequently, the people) accompanied with his interactions with other Hungarian scholars including Ferenc Verseghy, László Teleki, and others.[2]

More recent works on Herder's influence and the reception given to his writings by the Czech and Slovaks include that of Robert B. Pynsent, who argues that Ján Kollár not only diverged from some of Herder's claims, but also that he openly opposed some of his conclusions and ideas.[3] Also, Róbert Kiss-Szemán and Marcella Husová Rossová have acknowledged the influence of Herder on Kollár, in their article on the historical work of the latter. However, they also cited Hungarian sources that influenced Kollár's work *Dobré wlastnosti Národu Slowanského* [The Good Qualities of the Slavic people], which questions to an extent the primacy of Herder's thought in the case of the famous Slovakian poet.[4] Alexander Maxwell argues that Kollár did not just blindly follow Herder's ideas, but that he also developed them further, often reaching his own conclusions, which were represented later in his idea of literary Pan-Slavism.[5]

This paper takes a novel approach by exploring the impact of Herder's thought on the Serbian readership in the first half of nineteenth century, especially on those Serbs

---

[1] Ivan T. Berend, *History Derailed. Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (LA: University of California Press, 2003), 48–49.

[2] Kazinczy labelled Herder a "false prophet," as he recalls that "he laughed over Herder's writings on the disappearance of the Hungarian language and nation." See Sándor Hites, "'Herder hamis próféta.' Kazinczy és a nyelvhalál ['Herder is a false prophet.' Kazinczy and the language death]" in *Ragyogni és munkálni. Kultúratudományi tanulmányok Kazinczy Ferencről* [To shine and work. Cultural studies researches about Ferenc Kazinczy], ed. Attila Debreczeni and Gönczy Monika (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2010), 29.

[3] For example, they differed on the questions of notions of multinational states, which Kollár accepts, and the issues of difference between patriotism, favored by Herder, and nationalism, promoted by his Slovakian follower. See Robert B. Pynsent, "Slávy Herder," in *Ján Kollár a slovanská vzájomnosť. Genéza nacionalizmu v strednej Európe* [Ján Kollár and Slavic reciprocity. Genesis of nationalism in Central Europe], ed. T. Ivantyšynová (Bratislava: Spoločnosť pre dejiny a kultúrustrednej a východnej Európy - Historický ústav SAV, 2006), 11–24.

[4] Róbert Kiss-Szemán and Marcella Husová Rossová, "Historičnost a kreace neboli Dobré wlastnosti Národu Slowanského?" [Historicity and Creation or The Good Qualities of the Slavic people?], *Česká literatura* 57, no. 6 (2009): 802–816.

[5] Alexander Maxwell, "Herder, Kollár, and the Origins of Slavic Ethnography," *Traditiones* 40, no. 2 (2011): 79–95.

participating in their cultural organization and press in Buda and Pest, in the Kingdom of Hungary. The research demonstrates that the Serbian intelligentsia were involved in the Czech and Slovakian dominated Pan-Slavic movement in both Buda and Pest. Herder's ideas were adopted primarily through the work of Ján Kollár and Pavel J. Šafárik. The latter would use Serbian print to further develop Herder's thoughts about the "enslavement" of the Slavs in the past, a concept also analyzed in this paper.

Koselleck's conceptual analysis

In his writings on the concept of *revolution* and about the possibility of predicting future events, Koselleck noted that there were differences between people who, in one way or another, wrote about the upcoming political changes in France. By comparing the predictions of Denis Diderot, Christophe Martin Wieland, Frederick the Great, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others, he determined that they based their assumptions on the current political and social state of affairs, by taking examples from Antiquity.[6] Their predictions, regardless of how close some were, were largely disproven by reality itself, as well as the speed and unpredictability of the changes in France that came after 1789. Koselleck concluded that the more their predictions were based on past historical experiences the greater was the chance of them repeating. The key point here was that when these past events were located in the "multilayeredness of historical experience." Koselleck made a distinction between three temporal planes where the events might occur: short-term actions, middle-term procedural constraints, and a "plane of metahistorical duration," which he explained as "long-term, rather, permanently repeatable possibilities."[7] Those authors, like Voltaire and Wieland (more specifically, his 1787 prediction of a peaceful revolution in France) who desired a "uniqueness of the coming revolution" to manifest, failed to place their narratives within any of these planes, because their assumptions were coming from the spirit of their age, that of the Enlightenment.[8]

---

[6] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 24–25, 48–49.

[7] Koselleck also explained how these planes differ among each other. The second was the one where an observer could extract a course of events that would be placed in their predictions. The repetition of the revolutions, or rather political changes, is one of them. The last temporal plane was reserved for more or less timeless truths that were unchangeable throughout history, and they were construed by the authors (like those from antiquity) who had the desire to find them in the first place. See Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 143–146.

[8] Koselleck, *Conceptual History*, 141–142.

When Koselleck compares the predictions of Wieland, on the one hand, and those of Diderot, on the other, we can see how the latter was closer to correctly predicting the outcome of the anticipated changes in France. Wieland might be, as Koselleck noted, influenced by the "optimistic Enlightenment hopefulness," or maybe he had an English example of the Glorious Revolution in mind, which had a peaceful outcome. Nevertheless, the ideas of progress and the uncertainty of the future, still more utopian than dystopian, were evident here. The crucial period of change was the period of the Enlightenment when the concepts of time, revolution, history, and others changed significantly, in comparison to their previous understanding among the educated intelligentsia in Europe. The concept of history changed in the decades between 1760 and 1780, when it stopped describing a collection of events from the past and gained its singular meaning. At the same time, Koselleck notes that the concept of the "philosophy of history" also emerged, in which past events lost their "exemplary nature" and when "the discovery of the uniqueness of historical processes and the possibility of progress" appeared.[9] History, as it was already stated, was not anymore an accumulation of stories, events or a part of a theological and eschatological interpretation of the world, but instead possessed its own agency. This also meant that the understandings of the past and the ways of how the time flows were interpreted by following certain patterns, which had been present since Antiquity, and in the writings of notable theologians. However, unlike the Ancient Greek debates about the best suitable constitutions for mankind, or the writings of Saint Augustine about the temporality of this world and its perfect counterpart in the Heavens, in the Eighteenth century more and more authors began to produce universal histories which led to the development of the philosophical approach to the concept of "historical time."[10] In the words of Koselleck: "The concept of "history pure and simple" laid the foundation for a historical philosophy, within which the transcendental meaning of history as space of consciousness became contaminated with history as space of action."[11] Koselleck's schematization of "temporal experience" included the division of the irreversibility of events, the repeatability of events and the "contemporaneity of noncontemporaneous (Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeitigen)." The last refers to the "prognostic structure of historical time" and consists of the prognosis of the future, based on the events that already exist in the present, even though their development still remains uncertain. The evolution of the concept of time was explained elsewhere by Koselleck. Its abandoning of the previous eschatological structure and its opening space for foresight and predictions

[9] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 36.
[10] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 93–104.
[11] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 93.

also culminated in the epoch of the Enlightenment.[12] The "doctrine of Providence," designed by God, was replaced by that created by man, stemming from the ongoing process of the secularization of thought.[13]

Herder's "philosophy of history"

In contrast to this "process of secularization of thought", the German poet and philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*[14] believed that the future of mankind is to achieve this Providence of God by creating flourishing societies based on "reason and justice." He located this goal within the natural world. There, mankind would gradually adjust and adapt, and over time reach a degree of a more durable humanity. Herder argued that the Providence of God had for its ultimate goal the well-being of all creatures.[15] His thought was, therefore, based in spirituality but perceived through the rules of the natural world.[16]

Herder's work could be understood as an attempt at writing a universal history in the form of a "philosophy of history." Koselleck's divisions of the temporal experiences, more specifically the possibility of deducing the course of the "historical time," are present in the work of Herder. As was already mentioned, his idea of the gradual advancement of human civilization to the state of stable societies based on reason and logic had a prophetic tone, regardless of the humility of the author about his capabilities to predict what would happen. Herder sought a "philosophy of history" because "as everything in the world has its philosophy and science, there must not also be a philosophy and science of what concern us most nearly, of the history of mankind at large. Everything enforced this upon my mind; metaphysics and morals, physics and natural history, and lastly religion above all the rest."[17] Therefore, he tried to diversify his approach to the understanding of the history of the mankind and the place of humans in the world,

---

[12] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 9–26, 26–43

[13] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 102.

[14] The original title of the work was *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–91).

[15] Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of a Man,* trans. T. Churchill (London: Printed by Luke Hapfard, 1800), vol. 1, Kindle edition (2016), Preface (Location 152).

[16] Herder did not separate nature from God, which he stated explicitly in order to distance himself from the naturalists who did so. See Herder, *Outlines*, Preface (Location 223). Therefore, he was a follower of Spinoza, by equating nature with the God, or in words of Dragan Prole, Herder sought for "internal connection with which a unique display of the spiritual and material world would be enabled." See Dragan Prole, "Pojam tradicije kod Herdera i Kanta" [The notion of tradition at Herder and Kant], *Arhe* 1, no. 2 (2004): 210.

[17] Herder, *Outlines*, Preface (Location 176).

according to God's plan. However, his predictions remained similar to those desires of Voltaire and Wieland about the "upcoming revolution," which Koselleck dubbed a part of "optimistic Enlightenment hopefulness." Even though Herder criticized, as a follower of Rousseau's ideas of naturalism, some ideas of the Enlightenment, he was still imbued with the spirit of it.[18]

Herder's *Outlines* is also one of the seminal works in the field of anthropology, even though the term itself was not used by the author.[19] Herder emphasized the importance of folk poetry and songs and the vernacular in general. There, he argued the idea that the history of the world consisted of the individual histories of different peoples, all with the necessary components that he emphasized. The language, according to Herder, had the ability to let these peoples express themselves and manifest their true character as a nation. If these peoples cherished their languages and based their cultural identities around them, they would elevate themselves from "the state of barbarism." Herder saw the lack of native languages as the reason for why their state was "so barbarous" for a long time. Berend states that Herder pioneered the collection of folk songs and poetry, which was evident in his works *Volkslieder* [Folk Songs] (1778) and *Stimmen der Völker* [Voices of the People] (1807). Furthermore, Berend states that "Herder's lifelong devotion to folk poetry combined the national concept with the democratic idea. By making a fetish out of folk poetry and the folk, Herder culturally incorporated the peasantry into the nation."[20]

---

[18] Miroslav Hroch argues that, even though Herder is cited as the source of Romanticism and some of its ideas, he falls under the period of the Enlightenment. However, Hroch notes that some of his ideas would be appropriated by the Romanticists, who would use them to "strengthen their arguments." See Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček, ed., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945),* vol. 2 (CEU Press: Budapest, 2007), 10. Alexander Maxwell shares Hroch's opinion in describing Herder as a "characteristic product of a Enlightenment, even though his "theory in history rested on theological foundations." See Maxwell, "Herder, Kollár, and the Origins of Slavic Ethnography," 80.

[19] Maxwell thinks it would be wrong to consider that Herder was somehow more an anthropologist rather than a philosopher. See Maxwell, "Herder, Kollár, and the Origins of Slavic Ethnography," 79–80.

[20] Berend, *History Derailed. Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 48–49.

Herder's "prophecy" about the future of the Slavs and the Pan-Slavists

Herder's writing had a significant impact on Slavic intellectuals, and especially on the Pan-Slavist theorists, like Josef Dobrovský[21], Pavel J. Šafárik,[22] and Ján Kollár[23]. Hans Kohn, in his study on the ideas of Pan-Slavism, saw this influence of Herder as twofold. His ideas about the importance of the vernacular languages, which he saw as a foundation of civilization for uneducated people around the world, received a great reception among the Slavic intellectuals in the first half of the Nineteenth century. However, more influential were Herder's ideas concerning the future of the Slavs, which he detailed in his *Outlines on the history of Mankind*, and which enthused the thoughts and hearts of the incoming Pan-Slavists. This belief in a bright Slavic future, however, was idealistic and not grounded in reality. This optimistic image made a huge impression not only on the Pan-Slavist intellectuals but also on future generations of Czech, Polish, Russian, and Croat politicians.[24] Herder writes in his *Outlines*:

> […] they [Slavs] followed the working of mines, understood the smelting and casting of metals, manufactured, fabricated linen, brewed mead, planted fruit trees, and led, after a fashion, a gay and musical life. They were liberal, hospitable to excess, lovers of pastoral freedom, but submissive and obedient, enemies to spoil and rapine. All this preserved them not from oppression, nay, it contributed to their being oppressed. For, as they were never ambitious of sovereignty, had among them no hereditary princes addicted to war, and thought little of paying tribute so they could but enjoy their lands in peace, many nations, chiefly of German origin, injuriously oppressed them.[25]

---

[21] Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829), often referred to as "The Grand Old Man" of Slavic studies, was a Czech historian and philologist. His best-known works are *Geschichte der Böhmischen Sprache und alten Literatur* (1792), *Slowanka zur Kenntnis der Slawischen Literatur* (1814) and *Institutiones linguae slavicae dialecti veteris* (1822). See Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism. Its History and Ideology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953), 5–6.

[22] Pavel J. Šafárik (1795–1861) was Czech scholar of Slovak origin who published works from history and philology, of which the most famous were *Geschichte der slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten* (1826) and *Slovanské starožitnosti* (1837). See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 4–6.

[23] Ján Kollár (1793) was a Slovak poet and scholar whose most famous works were Slávy Dcera (1824) and *O literárnej vzájomnosti medzi rozličnými kmeňmi a nárečiami slovanského národa* (1837). See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 8–11.

[24] Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, ix–xi.

[25] Herder, *Outlines*, Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9903–9909).

He predicted a bright future for all Slavs, referring to them as a collective (like other peoples he described), and that their potential would bring forth "the new age of Man", which would in turn replace the decaying culture of Europe:

> The wheel of changing Time, however, revolves without ceasing, and as these nations inhabit for the most part the finest country of Europe, if it were completely cultivated, and its trade opened, while it cannot be supposed but that legislation and politic, instead of a military spirit must and will more and more promote quiet industry and peaceful commerce between different states, these now deeply sunk, but once industrious and happy people will at length awake from their long and heavy slumber, shake off their chains of slavery, enjoy the possession of their delightful lands from the Adriatic Sea to the Carpathian mountains, from the Don to the Moldau, and celebrate on them their ancient festivals of peaceful trade and industry.[26]

Herder formed his ideas about the role of the Slavs and the land they inhabited after staying in Riga, where he held tenure in the period 1764-1769 under the patronage of the Russian Empress Catherine II. In his *Journal meiner Reise aus 1769* [Journal of my travel from 1769] he wrote about Ukraine, which he described as the "new Greece," predicting it would become a focal point in the upcoming cultural renaissance of the Europe. However, as István Gombocz noted, this first "prophecy" of Herder was free of "ethnic" connotations, as it focused on the geographical position of Ukraine, its resources and the potential of all those living there. Herder supports this claim by including Russia, Poland, and Hungary as the potential benefactors of such culture.[27] The only problem for this "new Greece," as John P. Sydoruk explained, was its lack of natural borders which prevented it becoming the center of cultural development at that level.[28]

---

[26] Herder, *Outlines*, Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9916–9923).

[27] István Gombocz, "The Reception of Herder in Central Europe: Idealization and Exaggeration," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 33, no. 2 (1997): 115. John P. Sydoruk incorporates this full quotation from Herder, in its English translation: "One day Ukraine will become a new Greece: the beautiful climate of this country, the gay mood of its people, their musical talent, their fertile soil, etc... will one time awake; from so many small wild tribes, such as, too, the Greeks once were, there will arise a cultured nation; and her boundaries will reach the Black Sea, and from there the wide world. Hungary, and a part of Poland and of Russia would become receivers of this new culture. From the Northwest this spirit would spread over Europe, which is lying in sleep, and the same spirit of progress would be useful, too, for all of Europe." See John P. Sydoruk, "Herder and the Slavs," *AATSEEL Journal* 13, No. 3 (1955): 73.

[28] Sydoruk, "Herder and the Slavs," 73.

Michal Kopeček states that Ján Kollár's and Pavel J. Šafárik's understanding of Pan-Slavism derived directly from the writings of Herder. He describes Kollár as "a true disciple of Herder …[who]…promoted the non-political and non-state-centered concept of the nation that can be applied to many countries."[29] This is a precise description of the so-called "Cultural Pan-Slavism" that, according to Lawrence D. Orton, found its place among the Slavs living in the Kingdom of Hungary. He differentiated it from both the Austro-Slavism (mainly present in what is today Slovenia and Czech Republic) and the "messianic strain of Pan-Slavism" (present among the Poles).[30] Hans Kohn coined this a "Western stage" of Panslavism, lead by the Czechs and Slovaks in the first half of the Nineteenth century.[31]

Ján Kollár and Pavel J. Šafárik were studying during the events of the Wartburg Festival 1817,[32] and both incorporated the ideas of Herder, especially those on the nature and future of the Slavs, in their later work.[33] Kollár's epic poem *Slávy Dcera* [The Daughter of Sláva] was imbued with a sense of Slavic unity, their common origin and the bright future ahead.[34] The work was not only heavily influenced by Herder's "Slavic chapter," but it also heaped praise on the German poet.[35] For most of his life he lived and worked in Pest as a Lutheran chaplain. Both he and Šafárik were part of Czech intellectual circles, regardless of their Slovak origins. Kollár was surrounded with the Slovaks of Pest, but also with the South Slavs, mainly Serbs and Croats, who lived in Pest and Buda. His work *O literárnej vzájomnosti medzi rozličnými kmeňmi a nárečiami slovanského národa* [On literary reciprocity between the different tribes and dialects of the Slavic peoples] (1837) was in a way a product of his own beliefs, which were partially influenced by Herder and by his own life experience. Šafárik, on the other hand, was a director and a professor of the Serbian Gymnasium in Novi Sad (1819-1833), where he befriended Georgije Magarašević,

---

[29] Trencsényi and Kopeček, *Collective Identity*, vol. 2, 207.

[30] Lawrence D. Orton, *The Prague Slav Congress of 1848* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1978), 6–7.

[31] Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, xiv.

[32] The Wartburg Festival of 1817 was a celebration organized by the German university youth (Burschenschaften), in commemoration of the three centuries of the Reformation as well as the third anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig. The atmosphere of the festival was energetic and imbued with a rising sense of German unity and nationalism. See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 7.

[33] Michal Kopeček also emphasizes the importance of the influence of the Burschenschaften movement on their ideas of Slavic unity. See Trencsényi and Kopeček, *Collective Identity*, vol. 2, 206–207.

[34] Trencsényi and Kopeček, *Collective Identity,* 208–210.

[35] Hans Kohn cites the extracts from Kollár's *Slávy Dcera* which praised Herder as „the friend of the Slavs": *Kant and Wieland have no nationality. /Schiller is cold to us, Klopstock mute, /Not thus you, priest of humanitarianism. / Contrary to custom you were the first /To defend and highly praise the Slavs/For that accept from them honor and thanks /*. See Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, 8.

another professor, who would in 1825 create the Serbian literary magazine *Letopis Serbski* [The Serbian Annual], which became the primary literary outlet of cultural society *Matica Srpska* [The Serbian Queen Bee] and which was initially published in Pest (1826-1864).[36]

Šafárik's first significant work *Geschichte der slawischen Sprache und Literatur nach allen Mundarten* [The History of the Slavic Language and Literature according to all Dialects] (1826) followed the writings of Herder about the unity of Slavs. There, Šafárik perceived all Slavic languages as dialects of their extinct ancestral language. Added to this, the prophetic "turning wheel of Time" as a sign of the inevitable changes coming to Europe, with the Slavs at its center, featured in Šafárik's *Geschichte* as a paraphrase of Herder's famous lines.[37] The notion of the "peacefulness" of Slavs was also appropriated in his other work, *Slovanské starožitnosti* [The Slavic Antiquities] (1837), which he used to argue for their antique origin in Eastern Europe and their enslavement by the Germans.[38] Both Šafarik and Kollár were surrounded by the Slavs of the Austrian Empire, primarily those in the Kingdom of Hungary, which both influenced their work and established them among the Serbs, Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes and others.

Herder's "prophecy" in the Serbian publications of the Kingdom of Hungary

Herder was introduced to the Serbian readership indirectly, through the original contributions of Šafárik and Kollár or, more commonly, through the excerpts translated from their main works. In the very first issue of the *Letopis* in 1825 Šafarik authored an article titled *Karakter Slavenskog naroda voobšte* [A character of the Slavic people in general], which was one of his early works dedicated to the origin, history, and the character of the Slavs. This article was a rebuttal of sorts, against publications and articles produced by non-Slavic authors, who wrote disparagingly about the Slavs. Utilising twelve different examples gathered from a period of some seven decades before the time of writing, Šafárik showed how the Slavs were being slandered. They were explicitly labelled as "lazy," "wild," "drunkards," "uncivilized," "dirty," and so on, and indirectly, through underestimations of their numbers as well as through the vilifying their languages. For example, Šafárik mentions that the Hungarian scientist and professor András Dugonics equated the languages of the "Russians, Ruthenians with Gypsies," and made similar

[36] Stanley B. Kimball, "The Austro-Slav Revival: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Literary Foundations," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 63, No. 4 (1973): 12–13.

[37] Gombocz, "Reception of Herder," 112.

[38] Orton, *Slav Congress*, 3.

remarks about the Slovak language.[39] Even though the examples given by Šafárik did make generalizations about a certain group of people, the responses he provided were of a similar nature, rather portrayed in a positive manner. In order to explain to his readers the true nature and character of the Slavs, Šafárik wrote: "Besides the other basic outlines of the Slavic character those which are especially distinguished are affection towards religion, hard-work, careless and innocent celebrations, love for their language, and friendliness towards the other nations."[40]

Every single one of these traits Šafárik discusses in length, with arguments supported with examples from history, linguistics, his own experience and anecdotal evidence. These characteristics stem directly from a short chapter in Herder's *Outlines*. The German author was not mentioned as a direct source for all the traits, even though Šafárik does cite him in the section about the "hard-working" character of the Slavs.[41]

However, the conclusion to this lengthy piece was dedicated entirely to Herder, and his views on the potential future of the Slavs. In short, due to their dire circumstances at the time, especially in the domain of cultural development and the number of their cultural institutions, the language was an important vessel which could assist their progress, preserve their cultural uniqueness and maintain connections with their ancestors. Šafárik ends the article with a "comforting message of Herder," directly citing his famous prediction made in his *Outlines* about the Slavs.[42]

Teodor Pavlović, who was an editor of *Letopis* (1832-1841) and also of a Serbian newspaper published in Pest, *Serbski narodni list* [Serbian People's Paper] (1835-1848), was also imbued with the ideas of Pan-Slavism and he befriended many prominent Slavs in Buda and Pest, including Kollár himself. In his newspapers, Pavlović would often include Slavic themes, but one article in particular published in 1835 directly referred to Herder and his ideas about the Slavs. Titled *Mnjenije o Slavjanima* [The Opinion About the Slavs], this piece was written by the editor himself, and while appearing objective it is in fact a restatement of the thought of the famous German thinker. It is peculiar to note how Pavlović refers to Herder, as one of the "wisest of the Germans and of all the peoples." The article itself is a direct translation of the famous "Slavic chapter," even though its length was altered by Pavlović. In his summary of the chapter, Pavlović redacted the parts

---

[39] *Serbskij Letopis* [Serbian Annual], ed. Georgije Magarašević, vol. 1, 1825, 70–71.

[40] *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 86.

[41] Šafárik wrote: "How Herder tended to acknowledge the hard-work [nature] of the Old Slavs was mentioned above." It was not anywhere to be found in the preceding text, so it might be possible that Šafárik redacted name of the German while compiling this section of the text. See *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 89.

[42] *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 98–99.

that went into depth about which areas the Slavs had inhabited, concurring with Herder's initial geographical assessment that included the areas "between the rivers Don and Elbe, and between the northern sides and the Adriatic Sea." This description of the areas they inhabited was without chronological frame, except for that referring to the future South Slavs, who were admitted by the emperor Heraclius "into Dalmatia, and the kingdoms of Sclavonia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Dalmatia were founded by them."[43] The article ends with the editor quoting Herder's "prophecy of a peaceful, mindful and happy future for the Slavs."[44] This "prophecy" of Herder was not explained further, and remains a wishful thought. The reason for this redaction, where the parts in which Herder wrote that the Slavs will "awake from their long and heavy slumber, shake off the chains of slavery," might lie in Pavlović's desire to avoid censorship, as he did not have the right to comment on political themes, nor would it be wise for him to make such bold claims in the "Age of Metternich."

It is also worth noting that the *Serbski narodni list* would typically have a citation under the title at the beginning of each issue. Placed on the front page, these selected quotations would encapsulate the thrust of the articles and would also directly promote its message to the readership. Some of these headlines would carry the Pan-Slavic messages of authors like Dobrovský, who was inspired by Herder. His quotation on the front page of the papers from 1838 is imbued with a narrative of kindness towards the Slavs and their oppression by the Germans.[45] The other example, from the same year, would be that of Kollár, whose citation called for cooperation between the Slavs in the literary and

---

[43] Herder, *Outlines,* Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9881–9890) For the educated mind of the Enlightenment, and for those generations that followed that age, this reference to the Roman emperor Heraclius (610–641) was enough to position the creation of the aforementioned Slavic kingdoms. It is peculiar why Pavlović would redact that direct reference to his own people, made by the "wisest of Germans." One interpretation would be that the ruling thought of the parts of the Serbian intelligentsia of that time was that the Serbs had longer presence in the Southeastern Europe than it was proposed by the historians of that time, especially by those of the German origin. Pavle Stamatović, who was editor of the magazines *Letopis* (1831–1832) and *Serbska Pčela* [The Serbian Bee] (1830–1831), wrote in particular about this "ancient history" of the Serbs, relying and extending the writings of Šafárik. As it was the case with the Czechs, who wrote about the antique, pre-German history of the Slavs in order to show their presence in the Eastern and Central Europe, Stamatović also wrote about the presence of the Serbs in Hungary prior to the arrival of the Magyars in the Ninth century. His writings were a part of the ongoing debate about nationality which was a prevalent issue in the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1830s and 1840s. See: Uroš Stanković, „Pavle Stamatović kao nacionalni publicista [Pavle Stamatović as a national publicist]," *Zbornik Matice Srpske za istoriju* [The proceedings of Matica Srpska in History] 83 (2011): 31–32.

[44] *Serbski Narodni List* [Serbian National Papers], no 7, August 19th of 1835, 56.

[45] *Serbski Narodni List*, no 7, February 12th of 1838, front page.

cultural spheres and the promotion of their unity.[46] These citations ceased to be used in the second part of 1839, but they represent a valuable source nevertheless.

The notions of "enslavement" adopted by the Pan-Slavists

Herder wrote in his *Outlines* that the "peaceful character" of the Slavs did not protect from "oppression" but was in a way enabling it and he located its cause in their lack of a domestic ruling caste. Instead, they had foreign hereditary princes ruling over them who had a more warlike nature, like the Germans in the West and Mongols in the East. The expansion of the former into the Slavic territories received more attention in this chapter, and Herder traces their enslavement to the time of Charlemagne. Over the preceding the centuries the Germanic conquest continued, as Herder writes:

> What the Franks began, the Saxons completed; in whole provinces the Slavians were expatriated or made bondsmen, and their lands divided among bishops and nobles. Northern Germans ruined their commerce on the Baltic, the Danes brought their Vineta to a melancholy end, and their remains were reduced to that state to which Peruvians were subjected by the Spaniards.[47]

Herder's lines were paraphrased by Šafárik in his article on the general character of the Slavs which was printed in the very first issue of the *Letopis* in 1825, where he states:

> Who did not read in the history of the Middle Ages what happened in the lands of Vilcs, Obodrites, Polabians, Pomeranians, Sorbs, and other Slavs, who lived between the Baltic Sea and Tatra mountains; when the deadly swords of the Franks and Germans did to the Slavs something similar what Spaniards swords did to the Peruvians?[48]

This notion of the subjugation of the Slavs which could be compared to those of the indigenous people in South America in the Early Modern era was repeated by the Pan-Slavic writers in their works. As István Gombocz notes, due to its "connotations of imperialist brutality" it was used by Czechs and Slovaks thinkers when they wanted to highlight the "neglect and exploitation of the Slavic territories" in the Nineteenth century by the Austrians and Hungarians.[49] In his article from 1825, Šafárik outright voiced his concerns about the present and the potential future of the Slavic people:

---

[46] *Serbski Narodni*, no 7, January 22nd of 1838, front page.
[47] Herder, *Outlines*, Book XVI, Chapter IV (Location 9909).
[48] *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 86-87.
[49] Gombocz, "The Reception of Herder in Central Europe," 111.

> Since that time when Huns, Goths, Avars, Franks, Magyars and so on, started pressing onto the Slavs, who were innocently preoccupied with the agriculture and trade, and began to entirely destroy some of them, the hatred and attacks started to overflow from the practical life into the writings, and from the writings again back to the life itself: and for that we cannot blame at all the writers from our neighboring nations, like they would not want that the Slavs again in the XIX century experience the same old and horrible acts, which occurred during the time of Heinrich the Fowler, Albrecht the Bear, Álmos, Árpád, Zsoltán, and others.[50]

Gombocz quotes extracts from Kollár's *The Daughter of Sláva* in which the poet laments the ill fate of the "Slava," brought about by the hands of the "Teutonia." In summary, Kollár portrays the enslavement of the Slavs, followed by unprecedented atrocities. He does so in a lyrical manner, but at the same time adheres to Herder's lines about its inception in the time of Charlemagne, which lasted for four centuries, a period the poet would happily banish from his memory.[51]

Subsequently, this "notion of inherent German guilt" led to the creation of a victim-like mentality, promoted by the aforementioned authors. Thus, as Gombocz writes, they left the prospect both for the righting of historical injustices and the possibility of compensation from the oppressors, a narrative which would become central to national romanticism. According to this view, nations like those of the Slavs were blameless and "innocent of expansionism," which would lead them to "assume such a role of rejuvenating and purifying Christian civilization."[52]

Conclusion

Reinhart Koselleck's writings on conceptual history and his explanations of the evolutions, and revolutions are a valuable perspective from which the work of Herder can be observed. The concepts of "revolution," "the historical time" and "philosophy of history" assisted in my "deciphering" of the meaning of Herder's work, particularly for the Slavic intellectuals of the late Eighteenth and the first half of the Nineteenth century.

Regardless of the fact that interpreting Herder's "prophecy" through the concept of "revolution" is stretching the imagination, it was still perceived by him as a social change that would eventually engulf the entirety of Europe. The fact that the work was written in the period 1784-1791 gives this "prophecy" a deeper meaning. However, as Koselleck noted, some of these prophecies of upcoming revolution(s) in France and Europe were

---

[50] *Serbskij Letopis*, vol. 1, 1825, 66.

[51] Gombocz, "The Reception of Herder in Central Europe," 111–112.

[52] Gombocz, "The Reception of Herder in Central Europe," 112.

an idealized interpretation by their authors, and Herder's work and especially the part about the Slavs, can be understood as that. Even though he criticized the Enlightenment, his predictions would, through Koselleck's system, fall precisely in that period.

Therefore, those "prophecies" were not rooted in the actual state of affairs the various Slavic peoples found themselves in, nor were they based on any examples from the past, regardless of Herder's desire for Ukraine to become the "new Greece." These idealistic predictions, however, found fruitful ground among the emerging Slavic scholars, who became proponents of Herder's ideas. The reason for this was precisely their "prophetic" nature. They were future-oriented and opened up a possibility of change and progress for the various Slavic peoples. The works of Kollár and Šafárik were heavily influenced by that specific part of the chapter dedicated to the Slavs in the *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*. By following Herder, they also created unrealistic prophecies about the unity and future of the Slavs; their writings would fail to pass the test of Koselleck's schematizations. Gradually, these idealizations of the past and the future would evolve into the national romanticism and the ideas of Pan-Slavists until 1848, from which year they would cease to exist in that form. The origin of that brand of national romanticism could be traced back to the notion of the "enslavement" of the Slavs by the Germans during the Early Middle Ages. This motive, in essence, was a representation of the German-Czech relations in the Nineteenth century. Further research could analyze the "translation" of this notion into the relations between the Serbs and Hungarians in the same period.

Herder's ideas were introduced to the Serbian readership through publications printed in Pest, which in turn were influenced by the existing works of the Pan-Slavists, mainly those of Kollár and Šafárik who were personally acquainted with the leading Serbian cultural figures of that time. Nevertheless, these "Herderian" motifs were already familiar and present in the Serbian printed periodicals, regardless of the lack of originality in their creation, which led to inclusion of the Serbian cultural sphere within the overarching Pan-Slavic ideology.

References

Berend, Ivan T. *History Derailed. Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, LA: University of California Press, 2003. https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520232990.001.0001

Kimball, Stanley B. "The Austro-Slav Revival: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Literary Foundations." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 63, No. 4 (1973): 1–83. https://doi.org/10.2307/1006167

Kiss-Szemán, Róbert and Marcella Husová Rossová. „Historičnost a kreace neboli Dobré wlastnosti Národu Slowanského?" [Historicity and Creation or The Good Qualities of the Slavic people?], *Česká literatura* 57, No. 6 (2009): 802–816.

Kohn, Hans. *Pan-Slavism. Its History and Ideology*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953.

Koselleck, Reinhart. *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Translated by Keith Tribe. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Koselleck, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Translated by Todd Samuel Presner. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Gombocz, István. "The Reception of Herder in Central Europe: Idealization and Exaggeration." *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 33, No. 2 (1997): 107–118. https://doi.org/10.3138/sem.v33.2.107

Herder, Johann Gottfried von. *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of a Man*. Translated by T. Churchill. London: Printed by Luke Hapfard, 1800, vol. 1, Kindle edition (2016).

Hites, Sándor. "'Herder hamis próféta.' Kazinczy és a nyelvhalál ['Herder is a false prophet.' Kazinczy and the language death]" in *Ragyogni és munkálni. Kultúratudományi tanulmányok Kazinczy Ferencről* [To shine and work. Cultural studies researches about Ferenc Kazinczy], edited by Attila Debreczeni and Gönczy Monika, 22–41. Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2010.

Maxwell, Alexander. "Herder, Kollár, and the Origins of Slavic Ethnography."

Traditiones 40, no. 2 (2011): 79–95. https://doi.org/10.3986/Traditio2011400205

Orton, Lawrence D. *The Prague Slav Congress of 1848*. Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1978.

Stanković, Uroš. "Pavle Stamatović kao nacionalni publicista [Pavle Stamatović as a national publicist]." *Zbornik Matice Srpske za istoriju* [The proceedings of Matica Srpska in History] 83 (2011): 25–43.

Prole, Dragan. "Pojam tradicije kod Herdera i Kanta" [The notion of tradition at Herder and Kant], *Arhe* 1, no. 2 (2004): 197–214.

Pynsent, Robert B. "Slávy Herder." In *Ján Kollár a slovanská vzájomnosť. Genéza nacionalizmu v strednej Európe* [Ján Kollár and Slavic reciprocity. Genesis of nationalism in Central Europe], edited by T. Ivantyšynová, 11–24. Bratislava: Spoločnosť pre dejiny a kultúrustrednej a východnej Európy - Historický ústav SAV, 2006.

Sydoruk, John P. "Herder and the Slavs." *AATSEEL Journal* 13, No. 3 (1955): 71–75.

Trencsényi, Balázs and Michal Kopeček. ed. *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945)* vol. 2. CEU Press: Budapest, 2007.

Printed sources

Serbskij Letopis [Serbian Annual], ed. Georgije Magarašević, vol. 1, 1825.

Serbski Narodni List [Serbian National Papers], no 7, August 19th of 1835.

Serbski Narodni List [Serbian National Papers], no 7, January 22nd of 1838.

Serbski Narodni List [Serbian National Papers], no 7, February 12th of 1838.

Krisztina Magyar

Jason Sokol.
The Heavens Might Crack: The Death and Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.
New York: Basic Books, 2018, 343 p.

Pro&Contra 2

No. 2 (2018) 87–91.

DOI: 10.33033/pc.2018.2.87

In the U.S., the fiftieth anniversary of King's death naturally occasioned fresh reflections on the meaning of his life, cut short by an assassin's bullet in Memphis on April 4, 1968. In *The Heavens Might Crack: The Death and Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.*, historian Jason Sokol revisits King's assassination and discusses the range of collective responses that it provoked, both in America and worldwide.

Sokol shows that King's murder made it evident more than anything else that America was a highly polarized nation, both along racial and political lines, at the end of the 1960s. In its different communities, news of the event provoked widely differing responses—they ranged from expressions of shock, outrage, grief, and despair to expressions of hatred and animosity. Ultimately, Sokol argues, King's death illuminated magnificently the various fault lines that cut across America's social and political landscape.

Sokol devotes one chapter to an exploration of international responses to King's assassination. He contends that, while he was alive, King was more readily embraced as a hero abroad than in his native country. His assassination, therefore, was front-line news in numerous countries. Exploration of the responses provoked by King's murder allows the author to highlight a central irony of King's political career: his death ultimately helped create both a more racially divided America and a more antagonistic world in general. Sokol argues that if King's efforts during his lifetime were spent on bringing the races more closely together in America, his death revealed "the depths of white racism, quickened the pace of black radicalism, and helped to break the races further apart" (257). King's death had much the same negative effect abroad. For example, Sokol explains how racial hatred bubbled to the surface in Britain after King's assassination, as well as how the event helped deepen the conflict that had existed for some time in West Germany between officials and protesters in the radical student movement (175).

Since his death, King has been largely transformed from difficult political activist to transcendent icon. In public memory today, he is mostly cast as a benevolent, unthreatening dreamer of social harmony who rose above all divisions, racial and otherwise. Nationwide, he is uniformly celebrated as a hero, venerated as a saint. Sokol's book concludes with an account of how this transformation has taken place and what he believes its consequences are. He argues that King's canonization, his ultimate transfiguration from much-hated "rabble-rouser" to venerated saint does not tell a "tale of diminishing racism" (9). Quite simply, his legacy has been "sculpted and scrubbed" (9) so that today, it is possible for Americans of all persuasions to embrace him and enlist what they believe his legacy is. Although the reader is made to understand that this cultural shift facilitated Barack Obama's rise to the presidency, he or she is also made to see not simply that racial tensions persist into the twenty-first century but, for example, the perceived monstrosity of the appropriation of King by opponents of Black Lives Matter. Sokol explains that

the latter like to reference King in denouncing what they see as their disruptive activism and inflammatory rhetoric. However, they are justified to do so, Sokol argues, only if they ignore altogether the more upsetting and contentious aspects of King's own activism. When Black Lives Matter protesters are denounced as disruptive and threatening, Sokol writes, their critics sadly forget that the King that they idolize and reference was himself committed to civil disobedience, causing "massive disruptions" throughout America (261).

Sokol laments the fact that a large number of Americans today have very little understanding of what King actually stood for. He believes that in today's tense political climate, to make clear "the substance of his actual teachings and actions" is indeed necessary, so that people can "reckon… with the actual King" (262).

Authors who wish to write about Martin Luther King, Jr. today face the challenge of having to recycle old material on him, yet offer fresh contributions. The literature that explores King's life and political activism is vast, so the challenge is great indeed. It appears that at best, what these books can achieve is offer novel perspectives on oft-told stories. In this respect, Sokol's work is no exception. While, naturally, it relies and builds in part on previous research on King's life, funeral and the import of his death, it is written from the vantage point of 2018, inviting the reader to consider what the collective amnesia with respect to the radicalism of King's nonviolent direct action strategies means for American race relations today.

Sokol's book also deserves praise for allowing a fresh view of King's radical agenda of human rights and economic equality, and the threat that it constituted. But the question is, threat for whom? Taking an international perspective, the author argues that it was easier for Europeans to applaud King while he was alive because he did not constitute a threat to *their* way of life. When he spoke of the need to reconstruct the social edifice from its foundations, it was the *American* edifice that he had in mind. "Indeed," Sokol argues, "foreign support for King only rarely amounted to support for a global movement for human rights and economic equality" (159). Viewed from this angle, one wonders all the more how the hatred that he invited in America, especially in the final years of his life, has finally become transmuted into the reverence surrounding his memory today.

Apparently, Sokol belongs to that group of critics who find King's inclusion into the pantheon of American heroes highly problematic, critics who simply understand it as

co-optation, as a demonstration of the country's power "to absorb […] all opposition"[1] and the ability of its representatives to use King to further their own agendas.

Apart from being politically motivated, Sokol's book is derivative of a deeply felt personal interest on the part of its author. As he admits, his initial trip to Memphis in 1998 impressed him to the extent that he decided he would one day carry out a more in-depth study of the events surrounding King's assassination. In part, then, it is this need for personal investment that spurred him, at a later point in his career, to dig into the archival collections whose list is included in the Bibliography section of the book.

---

[1] Ron Eyerman, *The Cultural Sociology of Political Assassination. From MLK and RFK to Fortuyn and van Gogh* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 56. Eyerman, in the same place, also allows for a more positive interpretation of the shift with respect to King: "On the other hand, however, one could speak not of co-optation and domestication, but of a radical transformation, in a moral and cultural, if not a political sense. From this perspective, the incorporation of MLK into the American pantheon and the transformation of his image represent a clear cultural shift, providing a new moral yardstick for gauging progress and also what being an American means." Ibid., 56.